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ABSTRACT

The status of English language education in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) in the era of Doi Moi, or economic structuring that began in 1986, is analyzed. Background information is given on the history of English language training in Vietnam since 1975, the municipality of Ho Chi Minh City, the emergence of Doi Moi policy, policy concerning licensing of language schools, school structure and administration, enrollment, availability of instructional materials, and the design of the foreign language certificate program, a system of written examinations administered by the ministry of education. Four programs, two of them evening programs, are then described in detail, including information on program structure, instructional materials used, curriculum design, teaching methodology, student profile, and teacher profile. Notes on additional schools observed are also presented. Appended materials include one standardized English examination, an English translation of the application form required to open a foreign language school in the city, and a sample unit of one set of instructional materials. Contains 4 references. (MSE)

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ED 418 605

SCHOOL FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAINING

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TRAINING IN VIETNAM IN THE ERA OF DOI MOI HO CHI MINH CITY: A DESCRIPTIVE CASE STUDY

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts in Teaching degree
at the School for International Training,
Brattleboro, Vermont

BY

LAWRENCE AVROM SHAPIRO

JUNE, 1995

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This project by Lawrence Shapiro is accepted in its present form.
Date: June 5, 1995
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Acknowledgments:

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ABSTRACT

Vietnam's program of economic restructuring "Doi Moi", which began in 1986, has created a new surge in adult education in Vietnam through the creation of foreign language night centres focusing, primarily, on the study of English. Language skills have emerged as an unquestionable asset for any Vietnamese aiming to capitalize on the new opportunities that foreign investment into the country has made available. Ho Chi Minh City, the economic centre of Vietnam, has witnessed the greatest surge in this linguistic pursuit with over one hundred foreign language night centres currently operating in the city. Examining the materials, curriculum, teaching methodology as well as the student and teacher populations of these schools become important guidelines in understanding the nature and development of English language training in Vietnam today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES v

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION 1

2. OVERVIEW OF HO CHI MINH CITY 6

3. DONG KHOI ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER 16

4. SAIGON FOREIGN LANGUAGE SCHOOL 31

5. UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION FOREIGN LANGUAGE NIGHT CENTER NO.8 42

6. UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION FOREIGN LANGUAGE NIGHT CENTER NO. 11 54

7. OTHER SCHOOLS OBSERVED 64

8. CONCLUSIONS 73

Appendix

1. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING "LEVEL B" EXAMINATION 91

2. ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF APPLICATION FORM REQUIRED TO OPEN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTRE IN HO CHI MINH CITY 99

3. SAMPLE UNIT OF STREAMLINE ENGLISH 108

ENDNOTES 110

BIBLIOGRAPHY 113

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Curriculum Design of Dong Khoi English Language Center....20

2. Curriculum Design of Saigon Foreign Language School.........34

3. Curriculum Design of University of Education Foreign Language Night Center No.8 45

4. Curriculum Design of University of Education Foreign Language Night Center No. 11 57

5. Curriculum Design of Dong A Language School......................67

INTRODUCTION

On February 3, 1994 President Bill Clinton lifted the U.S. Trade Embargo on America's former adversary, Vietnam. While the decision was based on bipartisan support in the Senate, the symbolic value of the action could not be underestimated. For nearly twenty years the United States of America and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam had been distant and hostile toward one another since the fall of the American-supported government of South Vietnam in the spring of 1975. The takeover of the country by Communist forces from North Vietnam ended decades of American involvement in South East Asia and also put into question the future of a united Vietnam under Communist control.

Following World War Two and after nearly one hundred years of French colonial occupation, (northern) Vietnam declared itself independent under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. There then followed an eight year war between returning French military forces and Ho Chi Minh's army, the Vietminh. The 1954 Geneva Accords divided the country at the seventeenth parallel creating a communist North Vietnam (The Democratic Republic of Vietnam), recognized by the Soviet Union and other communist bloc countries and South Vietnam (The Republic of Vietnam), recognized by the United States and other Western countries. Proposed elections to unite the country in 1956 never materialized and there then ensued the Second Indochina War between these two newly emerged nations supported by their respective superpower counterparts.

"The Vietnam War", as it became known throughout the world, galvanized public opinion regarding the nature of the conflict, the legitimacy of the "Vietcong" (armed guerrillas in the South) and

America's involvement in the region. The withdrawal of American combat troops as stipulated in the Paris Peace Accords of1973 became the first stepping stone to the eventual demise and overthrow of the government of South Vietnam. The Fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975 by North Vietnamese forces was the culmination of a general military offensive which had begun earlier that year. The renaming of the community as "Ho Chi Minh City", in honour of Vietnam's first communist leader, seemed to underline North Vietnam's uncontestable victory.

The reunification of Vietnam as "The Socialist Republic of Vietnam" in 1976 and a subsequent treaty of peace and friendship signed with the Soviet Union in 1977 left no question as to the political and economic path the new country had chosen. The ten year period following reunification resulted in devastating economic problems for this small developing country and a continued isolation from the western world. The American Trade Embargo made it difficult for other countries to work with Vietnam for fear of political reprisal from the United States. Accurate information regarding Vietnam became increasingly difficult to obtain and the country continued its economic downfall, becoming one of the poorest nations in the world.

The emergence of Mikhail Gorbachev as leader of the Soviet Union in 1985 began a series of reforms which would forever change East-West relations and in turn the Soviet-supported state of Vietnam. "Glasnost" and "Perestroika" outlined a policy of a free market economy and a change of political attitude toward the West. Vietnam, which had for decades been supported by the Soviet Union, was now faced with the prospect of limited financial and technical assistance from its fatherly superpower as well as dealing with a changing political ideology from Moscow.

The Sixth Party Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam which took place in Hanoi in 1986, ushered in the most dramatic set of reforms ever outlined in the country's history. "Doi Moi", or "Renovation Policy", attempted to parallel the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. Among these was a move to a "centralized free market economy", a conscious attempt to lessen the country's political isolationism and a very real desire to attract international investment by other countries and foreign private industry. Vietnam's subsequent withdrawal from Cambodia in 1990-1991, the relaxation of restrictions on tourist visas, the massive influx of foreign investment and government incentives to encourage domestic private industry, have transformed Vietnam's image in the outside world and dramatically increased its own standard of living. The demise of the Soviet Union has now made the policy of Doi Moi irreversible. The lifting of the U.S. Trade Embargo, in part to credit Vietnam for its cooperation with the United States in resolving the issues of lost prisoners of war, has now opened the door for American investors in Vietnam. Whereas thirty years ago Americans were committed to stopping communism in Vietnam, the Vietnamese today are now committed to a free market economy and continued cooperation with the American government.

In the first four months of 1994 there were estimated to be 923 projects of international investment operating in Vietnam representing a total investment capital of 8.9 billion dollars U.S.[1] France, the former colonizer, is now the fourth largest investor in this new Asian market. The ever growing tourist and business populations of the new Vietnam have placed unique challenges on the educational system as new skills are sought to meet the growing demands of an international community. As industry and tourism are the chief investments in the country, language training has emerged as one of the fastest growing domestic industries in Vietnam. The existence of independent language schools, free from the traditional control of a centralized government, reflects not only the desire of the Vietnamese to communicate with their new neighbours but also underlines the impact Doi Moi has had with local educators. Not one of the schools investigated in this study was in existence prior to 1989.

Though foreign language training has always been available at the secondary level with emphasis placed on Russian, reflecting Vietnam's political and trade ties with the former Soviet Union, the study of English and the creation of adult foreign language schools, commonly referred to as "night centres", has transformed Continuing Education in Vietnam. English language centres have now become a phenomenon particularly in Ho Chi Minh City, the former capital of South Vietnam. Reflecting the internationalism of Doi Moi, English language skills continue to be an unquestionable asset for any Vietnamese aiming to secure employment with an ever growing number of foreign companies operating in the country.

This study aims to explore the changing face of English language training in Vietnam as it is manifested through foreign language centres in Ho Chi Minh City. While a plethora of these schools has emerged in the wake of Doi Moi, little is understood of their nature or curriculum.

What determines the structure and content of instruction at these institutions? What are the new challenges Vietnamese educators face in this era of Doi Moi? We also want to acquire a better understanding of the role of foreign educators and the contribution they can make to language training in this country. While we may focus specifically on foreign language centres in Ho Chi Minh City, what is the effect of language training in the developing world in general? How does Vietnam, a nation almost invisible to the rest of the world for the last twenty years, see itself in that context? Such questions are important guidelines in comprehending one of the most misunderstand and complex societies in Asia.

OVERVIEW OF HO CHI MINH CITY

The Municipality of Ho Chi Minh City, an area designed following the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, is a vast territory stretching to almost the entire width of the country at that point in southern Vietnam. The immediate urban area, commonly referred to as "Saigon" by local residents, is roughly 140 square kilometers incorporating twelve local districts. Current estimates place the local population at four and a half million inhabitants[1] making Ho Chi Minh City in size and population the largest community in Vietnam and one of the most densely populated places on earth. Traditionally a port city, the community has historically been economically superior to the rest of the country in part due to its large system of rivers which extend southward into the Mekong Delta and out to the South China Sea, making the area highly valuable to traders. Massive American input throughout the 1960's and early 1970's made the city one of the most expensive in the world.

In the momentum of Doi Moi, after more than a decade of economic stagnation, Ho Chi Minh City has now reinvented itself. With its industrial output representing nearly one third of the national yield, the community has become the undisputed economic capital of Vietnam, making it the most favoured location for foreign investment. Currently, four hundred and fifty two international companies have commenced operation in the area, employing over fifteen hundred local residents. With an investment capital of over 3 billion dollars U.S., representing development projects in areas such as tourism, agriculture and industry, Ho Chi Minh City and its surrounding environs has become one of the fastest growing economic centres in the Far East. Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong and France are the largest foreign investors in the region.

While Ho Chi Minh City may be the most atypical community in a largely impoverished agrarian country, it unquestionably sets the economic and cultural pace of the nation. Today thousands of tourists and businessmen converge on the city, rekindling the dynamism of the Saigon of the 1960's. While the central government of the country may be hundreds of miles away in Hanoi, Vietnam's political structure offers a unique amount of autonomy to regional powers. The People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, the local governing body, has been a prime mover in attracting tourism and promoting foriegn investment in the area.

English Language Training

While the study of English is currently a dynamic and ever-growing enterprise in Ho Chi Minh City, the history of English language training has been a continuing effort in the community since the reunification of Vietnam in 1975. The background of English language training in the city brings important insights in understanding the present phenomenon of independent foreign language schools and the population's voracious desire to learn and communicate in English.

Following the reunification of North and South Vietnam into one country in the mid-1970's and the subsequent renaming of Saigon as "Ho Chi Minh City", a massive influx of Russian technicians and personnel entered the country as a united Vietnam embraced the communist bloc. English, which had been associated with the previous American-supported regime of South Vietnam, was now scorned and speakers were looked upon with suspicion. Though the language had been available as an academic pursuit in the North during the war, it was not popular. While some foreign companies operating in Ho Chi Minh City immediately after the war did require English speaking employees, the demand for such personnel in comparison with the new presence of Russian was minimal. The political stigma associated with English and English speakers in the new Vietnam was discernible.

Irrespective of the new political climate, there did exist in the five year period after reunification a desire among some to continue pursuing this linguistic study, though Russian was the undeniable foreign language of choice. Academic interest and a desire to absorb foreign reading material motivated some to pursue English skills in a community where the language on a day-to-day basis was almost unheard. While no formal study existed and the local Department of Education did not encourage it openly, this first "Embryonic Stage" of English language training did represent the first faltering steps this linguistic pursuit made in the new Vietnam. Though hardly useful at the time, English language skills would later become invaluable as the country continued its post-war development.

1980 saw the beginning of a second phase of English language training in Ho Chi Minh City. Though the country was firmly entrenched in the Soviet camp, the stigma associated with English, though still strongly felt, had decreased to a certain extent. More English language books became available in the country and a greater desire for specialized study of English became apparent as more Vietnamese desired these language skills for specific work environments. According to the Department of Continuing Education of Ho Chi Minh City, there were thirty "night centres" in the community offering foreign language instruction to those interested[2], though such centres were under the firm control of the local educational bureaucracy. This "Consolidation Phase", a reappraisal of English coupled with a desire among the population to study it, constituted the second stage of English language training in Ho Chi Minh City. This lasted until the introduction of the federal government policy of Doi Moi and its subsequent implementation.

The "Doi Moi Phase" of English language training, whose effects began to be felt in 1989, has had the greatest impact on local education since 1975. There are now estimated to be approximately 160 foreign language schools in the community geared primarily to English language study. More dramatic than the outgrowth of these centres has been their "independent nature" in the context of a centralized federal government. Whereas previously these institutions were strictly regulated (if not operated) by government officials, the nature of foreign language centres today has changed drastically. Though still required to obtain licenses from the Department of Education, independent local educators now have the opportunity to open their own schools and determine to a large extent their own curriculum and structure. While a minimal amount of observation by the Department of Education is required (in some cases no more than twice a year) the reality of foreign language training has made it part of the new surge of private enterprise encouraged by the Doi Moi Policy. Theoretically speaking, those with enough capital, and an ability to acquire facilities and instructors, can now open their own foreign language school to the general public.

However, this liberalism in education should not be confused with the kind of total independence thought of in the West. The Vietnamese political structure still places guidelines on most aspects of Vietnamese society (with or without Doi Moi) and the educational system is no exception. While "independent-oriented" schools do exist, the reality beneath the surface portends to a more subtle form of government presence. It is common, if not required, that all such schools have some type of alliance with institutions associated with the federal government. For example, the Dong Khoi English Language Centre has a relationship with the "Association of Science and Technology on Forestry" (not to be confused with the Ministry of Forestry) whose members in turn are involved with the political structure. While the members of the "Association of Science and Technology" may be "visiting" the centre very infrequently, its liaison with the school, along with the school's license, allows Doi Moi and its creators a continued presence in the ever changing Vietnamese society. This "semblance of government sponsorship", which is a reality for foreign language schools in Ho Chi Minh City, does not directly interfere with the mandate of the centres but does represent a continued desire to maintain some kind of government presence in local education.

Of the 160 foreign language centres in Ho Chi Minh City today, 124 of them come under the direction of the Foreign Languages Center of the Department of Continuing Education which in turn is a component of the Department of Education of Ho Chi Minh City. This body requires licenses to be obtained by local educators[3]. In 1993-1994, twenty schools were granted licenses by the Department and these are renewable every two years. If approved, applications for licenses are usually granted within a week. Two thirds of the schools coming under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education can be referred to as "private", i.e. they receive no funding from the local educational structure. The Department of Education is required to make available guidelines set by the Federal Ministry of Education in Hanoi. While these guidelines are encouraged they are not mandatory. As well, the Department of Education offers its own set of language proficiency examinations available to students across the city; these are both written and oral tests generally offered every two months.

On the streets of Ho Chi Minh City today, the words "Anh, Phap, Hoa" (English, French, Chinese) are proudly emblazoned on banners outside the buildings on scores of language centres. These centres, which normally rent their facilities from high schools and operate in the evening, have become an indelible part of Vietnam's urban landscape. Out of a total population of four and half million, it is estimated that over 200,000 people in Ho Chi Minh City converge on these centres every day[4]. This statistic would also include centres associated with institutions of higher learning.

The availability of materials is a crucial issue in foreign language training not just in Ho Chi Minh City but throughout Vietnam. English language learning materials are almost exclusively British in origin, the U.S. embargo and political isolation of Vietnam rendering American educational materials almost non-existent, though more learning aids from the United States are now coming into the country. The "bible" of English language students in Vietnam's largest community is unquestionably British Streamline English, a four volume English language series with accompanying audio cassettes. Conceived for beginners in the "Departures" volume, the subsequent editions, "Connections", " Destinations", and "Directions", take the learner to a solid intermediate level in communicating in English. Divided into dialogues and monologue sections with accompanying grammar points, British Streamline English has also become a measurement of English learned. It is not uncommon to hear a student declare "I've completed Book 2 (Connections) of Streamline" as a way of communicating to someone else that person's level of ability.

Bookstalls around Ho Chi Minh City will commonly include the following titles in English language training: British Streamline English, New Concept English, Person to Person, English Grammar In Use, Practice Your English and Headway. The recent Vietnamese/English edition of Michael Swan's Practical English Usage and significant new Vietnamese/English dictionaries have all contributed to a new relationship between the two languages as English language training continues to grow and expand in Ho Chi Minh City.

The Foreign Language Certificate Program

The Foreign Language Certificate Program, a system of written and oral examinations created by the Ministry of Education in Hanoi to determine language ability for individual students, has become a significant aspect of foreign language training in Ho Chi Minh City. Some schools measure the success of their programs by how well their students do on these examinations. Because of this, the "A Level" (beginner) "B Level" (intermediate) and "C Level" (advanced) measurements of English language ability, as designed by the Ministry of Education, have become a framework for foreign language preparation in Vietnam. In Ho Chi Minh City, the local Board of Education is responsible for writing and administering these tests based on the guidelines from their superiors in Hanoi.

In recent years, a distinction has been observed between the "A,B,C Exams" offered through the local Department of Education and similar kinds of tests prepared and administered by the University of Education of Ho Chi Minh City together with other institutions of higher learning in the area. These university-sponsored exams have attracted more attention from local students and are regarded as being more stringent and of higher quality. In the summer of 1994 it was estimated that 4,000 students took the Department of Education sponsored tests while 7,000 students took examinations offered through the University of Education.[3] Presumably, tests of language ability as organized by university educators command a greater social status by students.

The Ministry of Education guidelines (which the Department of Education of Ho Chi Minh City and the University of Education follow) divide English language training into three levels: Elementary, Intermediate and Advanced. The vast majority of students seeking certificates will aim for the "B Level" (intermediate) regarding its attainment as the first stepping stone to securing employment with businesses seeking English-speaking employees. In many cases, these companies (particularly if they are foreign) will train new employees in their own constructed English speaking programs once the employee has attained his/her "B levels".

Department of Education sponsored "Level B" exams, as observed in Ho Chi Minh City in the summer of 1994, found several hundred students writing 120 minute written examinations divided into three parts: Reading Comprehension, Use of English and Listening

Comprehension. Following this there then emerged brief (5-10 minute) "interviews"; students conducting conversations in English with examiners. Ministry of Education guidelines regarding communicative competency recommend one or more of the following topics to be dealt with at the intermediate level of the interview stage of the examinations:

1. Personal Identity
2. Student's House
3. Homelife
4. Education and future career
5. Free time, entertainment
6. Travel
7. Shopping
8. Food
9. Foreign Language
10. Weather

As we shall see, communicative competency remains an issue in English language training in Ho Chi Minh City. The interview segment of the certificate examinations and the guidelines surrounding it have implications regarding foreign language training as a whole in Vietnam. One exchange of this interview segment was recorded during observations made of the certificate examinations conducted in Ho Chi Minh City:

> Examiner: How do you like the weather today?
> Student: Yes, I like very much because the weather today is very nice.
> Examiner: Very nice? What will you do when you have free time?
> Student: I uh, have free time I read a book and watching television.

Other exchanges, with different individuals include:

Examiner: How long have you worked in a taxi?
Student: One hundred days.
Examiner: How much money do you make in a month?
Student: Mmm. . .same same one hundred dollars.[5]

Often conducted with two students at a time or while half a dozen other students are conducting their oral tests with other examiners in the same room, the "interview" segment of the certificate exams are clearly disproportional in duration to the written tests and as well lack the necessary intimacy to determine a confident speaking ability. Nevertheless, The Foreign Language Certificate Program is a vital link between those who organize independent language schools and the local educational body attempting to ascertain linguistic aptitude on the part of the population. For many Vietnamese, attaining the different levels of the certificates is an important goal in their language training, significantly influencing the direction and structure of independent foreign language schools in Ho Chi Minh City.

DONG KHOI ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER

186-188 Le Thanh Ton Street
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Tel.: 230351

The Dong Khoi English Language Center is one of the largest and possibly the best organized of the independent-oriented foreign language schools in Ho Chi Minh City. In many ways it is indicative of the current nature of these institutions operating in the community today. Commencing operation during the first phase of the Doi Moi Era in 1989 with a student enrollment of 200, the Dong Khoi English Language Center has a central downtown school and as well incorporates two annex schools; one in the same downtown location as its parent institution (in District 1) and another several kilometers away from the city centre in District 3, both in Ho Chi Minh City.

The central downtown annex on Le Thanh Ton Street (which is the subject of this chapter) currently offers language study to 2807 students. Utilizing 14 classrooms on four different floors, there are roughly 35 students per class with a total teaching staff of 30 instructors. Classes are available seven days a week.

Materials

As with many other language schools in Ho Chi Minh City, The Dong Khoi English Language Center's text of preference is Streamline English incorporating all four components of the series: " Departures", "Connections", "Destinations", and "Directions". As well, New Concept

English is also heavily used. These two textbooks make up the essential reading material utilized at this center. However, other sources such as English Grammar In Use, Practice Your English and Regent's English Workbook are also encouraged and employed in the curriculum. All texts are available at the center's bookshop.

In addition to the texts as reading materials, the Streamline English series also includes a student's workbook which accompanies the main edition with which the class as a whole will work. This is an important dimension to the series and one that is lacking in most other written learning sources in Ho Chi Minh City. The "Streamline English Student's Workbook" allows students the opportunity to do their own writing in relation to the passage or dialogue in question and will always offer Vietnamese translations of the material being examined. While the use of two languages in the classroom is an issue in foreign language training in Vietnam, written translation of texts, as found in these student workbooks, are heavily used by learners and have become an indispensable part of language study.

The Dong Khoi English Language Center also makes available audio cassette players to its instructors. Another central component of the Streamline English series, audio cassettes of each edition where native speakers recite the stories, monologues or dialogues of the books, are an integral part of how the series is taught in the classroom, not only at the Dong Khoi English Language Center, but in almost every foreign language center in Ho Chi Minh City where English is studied. These audio cassettes are almost always recitations made by British speakers incorporating a variety of native British accents which may in themselves be difficult for English-speaking North Americans to fully understand.

It is significant that none of the materials used at this institution or at many others, incorporates the study of English into anything that may be called a "Vietnamese Context". Because so much of the reading materials are created in England, they inevitably draw upon a British cultural context: culture-specific vocabulary, cultural institutions (i.e. the monarchy), British currency and of course spoken dialects reflecting specific geographical regions of that country. There is an implication that English is a language for and of Westerners. In the context of a current mass influx of Westerners into Vietnam, it is surprising that new learning materials reflecting that reality have not yet emerged. Regardless, Vietnamese students are often required to have a passing knowledge of British geography in order to know where certain communities are that the texts deal with. Materials that place English in a Vietnamese framework, incorporating Vietnamese communities, Vietnamese cultural values and the Vietnam of today have not yet emerged.

The Dong Khoi English Language Center also has available three video machines which are used in classes. Instructors are required to expose students to audio-visual vehicles for learning at least twice a month. It is unclear whether such videos, which again would be reflective of the English Streamline series, have had a measurable impact on the growing linguistic ability of the students. Whether students pursue such videos on their own is also debatable.

Curriculum

The mandate of the Dong Khoi English Language Center, as outlined by its director, is to improve the general ability students have in English and to prepare them for the certificate program examinations (described in Chapter 2) as organized by the Department of Education of Ho Chi Minh City. The centre has devised a learning program which correlates to skills required for each level of the certificates. This language strategy is made available to students prior to their enrollment. While the amount of time spent on each unit in the program may vary according to student ability, the table below outlines a stage by stage progression for language learning from the beginner to the intermediate level. Again, this system is primarily designed to ensure the student's successful completion of the certificate exams which are prepared by the Department of Education.

Table 1. -- CURRICULUM DESIGN OF DONG KHOI ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE

Class/Level	Introduction			Time	
		NEW CONCEPT			
	Streamline English Book/Lesson	Practice & Progress	Developing Skills	No. of Hours	No. of Months
		UNIT	PASSAGE		
Elementary 1	BookI/Units 1-40			156 hours	6 months
Elementary 2	Book I/Units 41-80	II/1-24		156 hours	6 months
Elementary 3	Book II/UNits 1-40	II/25-48		156 hours	6 months
	(Preparation for "A Level" Certificates)			78 hours	3 months
Intermediate 1	Book II/Units 41-80	III/49-72		156 hours	6 months
Intermediate 2	Book III/Units 1-40	IV/73-96		156 hours	6 months
Intermediate 3	Book III/41-80		I/1-20	156 hours	6 months
	(Preparation for "B Level" Certificates)			78 hours	3 months
Advanced 1	Book IV/Units 1-30		II/21-40	156 hours	6 months
Advanced 2	Book IV/Units 31-60		III/41-55	156 hours	6 months
Advanced 3	American Language Course Vol. 2.1-2.4			156 hours	6 months
	(Preparation for "C Level" Certificates)			78 hours	3 months

The above table reflects current values and perceptions not only of this particular institution but of many foreign language centres in Vietnam where it is almost impossible to separate language training from a total dependence on the materials available. The Dong Khoi English Language Center recognizes that the foreign language certificate program is modelled to a large extent on the Streamline English series. Because of this, instruction at the absolute beginner level through to the advanced level is heavily dependent on the Streamline series. 156 hours within a six month period is devoted to the first forty units of the "Departures" volume of Streamline English. Preparation for the "A Level" exam (elementary) from beginner class onward will represent a time period of nearly two years.

Of the Four Skills of language training (Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening), there is almost no emphasis at all on writing at this institution. The skills required to understand other speakers and be understood cannot be separated from the necessary reading skills which form the foundation of the Dong Khoi English Language Center. Communicative competency, the ability to freely communicate in everyday conversation, does not seem to be promoted in the reading materials and as such is lacking in the overall curriculum of this particular institution and many like it. It is debateable whether the foreign language examinations so many students prepare formeasure, or have the ability to measure,communicative competency in determining an individual linguistic ability. It is clear that the design of learning materials used, does, to a large extent, determine how an institution will construct and implement its own classes. Because the Streamline English series and other texts such as Practice and Progress make up so much of the content of the classes and, as we shall see, few instructors have had the opportunity to work or study in English speaking countries (allowing limited opportunity to create their own class content), availability of materials becomes the essential tool in curriculum design. While the Dong Khoi English Language Center can boast a variety of texts used in its classes as well as radio broadcasts of the Voice of America, the fact that it is defining itself not only as an English language training ground but more specifically as a program for the foreign language certificate examinations, its curriculum design must reflect that reality. The availability of materials (which influence the structure of the classes) as well as the goals of each foreign language institution in Ho Chi Minh City become prime influences in that institution's own curriculum development.

Teaching Methodology

> In the field of foreign languages. . .the teacher in Vietnam by and large traditionally used the grammar-translation method and concentrated on reading comprehension rather than employing the audio-lingual method. The development of reading and writing skills was thus a standard feature while less attention was paid to the development of listening and speaking skills.[1]

While the above reference may reflect past trends in foreign language teaching in Vietnam, there has been a perceptible shift away from the Grammar-Translation Method which in the West is regarded as almost irrelevant in language training. Teaching methodology as observed at many foreign language institutions in Ho Chi Minh City portend to a greater emphasis on the Audio-Lingual Method while at the same time incorporating individual teaching styles. The rigidity with which Vietnamese education as a whole has been associated and the authority status the individual instructor commands have not altered dramatically. However, certain changes have been noticed which may in the future be more obvious as the country's educational system adapts to the needs of a changing society.

Classes observed at Dong Khoi English Language Center in Ho Chi Minh City in the summer of 1994 suggested some current themes in the school's overall foreign language teaching methodology. Because written learning materials to a significant extent form the essence of these classes, the teaching methodology employed is closely intertwined with the materials available. Seldom if ever will an individual instructor have prepared his/her own personal materials to use in the classroom. The curriculum design of Dong Khoi demands close attention to the Streamline English series, requiring instructors to have completed specific sections of it within periods of time. How to use required texts in the classroom becomes an individual instructor's central concern.

Several intermediate classes observed at Dong Khoi found many if not all instructors using the Audio-Lingual Method as the fundamental vehicle for language learning. Invariably an instructor will approach the story of one unit of a text and have the class as a whole recite after them line by line. Some teachers will want little more than these students to memorize the passage and will direct the class to that end. One instructor divided up his thirty five students into couples and would have three couples in concert, stand and say the words back and forth until at least qualitative paraphrasing had been achieved.

Some instructors relied heavily on the use of the audio-cassette players, having the students listen to native Britons enact the dialogue in question and then incorporating a "listen and repeat" methodology (ALM) between the class and the tape so as to promote students' listening skills with the recorded voice of a native speaker. Such instructors would also identify problematic vocabulary, analyze such on the blackboard and then require students to know the corresponding antonyms or synonyms of the word in question. This was an attempt to reinforce the meaning of the vocabulary. Grammatical constructs were identified in the written passage and audio cassette where some instructors intentionally rewrote a sentence incorrectly omitting articles, subject/verb agreement and other aspects of structure. Individual students were then required to approach the blackboard and correct the intentional mistakes.

Determining comprehension was often dealt with by instructors directly questioning individual students concerning the content of the passage being studied. Often the instructor will deliberately misrepresent an aspect of the passage asking students if it is correct, anticipating that students will identify the misrepresentation.

Without question, however, is the preponderance of the Audio-Lingual Method where classes as a whole will recite passages after the teacher. Individual students will be required to stand and read the passage, sometimes but not always translating it into Vietnamese. No student-centred learning activities were observed, nor were any newer methodologies such as "The Silent Way" identified. Classes are primarily focused on the instructor enacting a perceived need to have the students repeat his/her recitation of the text as often as possible.

Student Profile

While it may be difficult to offer concise impressions regarding the English language proficiency, perceptions and attitudes of over 2800 students at a single institution, observations of classes at Dong Khoi, informal questioning of students by the author as well as responses to written inquiries randomly distributed, have produced insights into who these students are, their language ability, goals and desires.

Observations of teacher-student interaction at predominately intermediate classes at the Dong Khoi English Language Center reflect a working aptitude with English on a number of levels. Students are able to respond to teacher instructions when working from the text in question. While an obvious accent is present, student pronunciation is intelligible. Obvious pronunciation problems associated with Vietnamese speakers such as word-final voiceless stop consonants (/p/,/t/ and /k/) and word-final fricative consonants were observed. As well, a significant amount of transferring, where students will take their own linguistic grammatical structures and place them onto an English form, was evident. The everyday Vietnamese expression "Khong co", referring to an individual lacking something, was often given its literal translation in English, "No have", in conversation. Vietnamese seldom if ever use the pronoun "I" in general conversation when referring to themselves.

Student proficiency in English reflects a rather token high school exposure to English which draws on reading skills primarily. This rudimentary competence is enhanced by current English classes at the institution in question which attempts communicative competency through texts, as opposed to task-oriented learning. Because of this, student proficiency in English is functional in the classroom but may be questionable in more everyday situations. Pronunciation, listening skills and reading skills are adequate.

Writing skills were examined in the context of three page questionnaires which, in addition to demonstrating student writing ability, also illuminated students'own values, including why they chose the Dong Khoi English Language Center to study English and how they think their English language skills will help them in their own career. A 22 year old male, who had studied English for two years and lived in Saigon all his life, felt that Dong Khoi was high quality because:

> this school is one of the well-known ones. I've learnt alot such as English grammar and listening to the tape. However I've been trying to listen to the Voice of America at home. In this school, I've found that everybody is very friendly including teachers. My teacher is a enthusiast, and I feel that something tows me to study in this center.[2]

A 52 year old married businessmen with two children who had been attending Dong Khoi for two years commented:

> I want to study English in my whole life. Because I am fond of English, and foreign language gives me a lot of knowledge for instance: civilization, science geography, culture and sociality. . .this language school has been helpful to me How to read, how to speak, how to write and how to hear English. Maybe, I have a great progress in English as to me.[3]

Despite obvious problems in punctuation, problems in meaning and grammatical constructs, written responses by students at Dong Khoi not only reflect writing ability but also offer important insights into why Vietnamese study English and how they feel it plays a role in the development of their own country. Most respondents had lived in the immediate community their entire lives and many were currently employed. A few in fact were housewives strugglingto learn the new language. A significant number of students were under the age of thirty. Most had studied English in high school at one point and the majority had been in attendance at Dong Khoi for at least two years. Almost all respondents reported that their total cost of books and tuition for one month was 80,000 Vietnamese Dong or roughly ten American dollars. A 36 year old refrigerator repairman, married with two children commented:

> the aspect of the school program that is helping me the most is grammar. The least of school program is speaking and listening. [English language training] help me to find out a job. I can read the new paper or magazine or listening the radio. . .This language school has been helpful me too much indicated me the way to learn English.[4]

The respondent's observation that speaking and listening is the weakest aspect of the school program is significant and while not many respondents share that view in totality, the consistent opinion was that grammar was the most helpful skill, implying other skills took a lesser emphasis. While the Audio-Lingual Method demands student speech, it does not imply independent speech by individuals. Grammar seems more accessible to most students while at the same time drawing away from communicative competency.

Most students firmly believe their language study will directly improve their employability and in turn their standard of living. Many described Dong Khoi as having a "good reputation" while many simply chose it because it was in their neighborhood. In addition, many students felt that learning English broadened their own intellectual horizons as a way of learning about the world in a society which until very recently had made it illegal to speak to foreigners. The value of language study as a vehicle for intercultural knowledge in addition to a communicative ability was frequently observed. All students expressed a desire to continue learning English even after they attain their certificate levels if they can afford to do so. This sentiment was best summed up by a twenty-five year old woman who wrote: "I will learn English forever. If I have condition."[5]

Teacher Profile

The Dong Khoi English Language Center's central downtown location currently employs thirty instructors; twenty male and ten female. All are graduates of "Dai Hoc Su Pham" or university level teacher training colleges, a five year program. In Ho Chi Minh City this is referred to as "The University of Education of Ho Chi Minh City" which trains student teachers in a variety of disciplines. This should not be confused with The University of Ho Chi Minh City, the community's central broad based institution of higher learning. While most instructors at Dong Khoi received their education in Ho Chi Minh City, many others acquired their teaching skills at similar-type programs in Hue, the country's fifth largest community located in central Vietnam which is noted for its strong academic tradition.

The age of the instructors ranges from 23 to 57 with many teachers having been trained by Americans during the war. The director of the institution himself earned a Master's degree in the United States. It is not uncommon for English teachers in Vietnam to claim training in the U.S. on their business cards. While the years of teaching experience varies with each instructor, it has been estimated that the average years of teaching experience for the teaching body at the Dong Khoi English Language Center as a whole is ten, which is relatively high.

It is particularly difficult to investigate or acquire an understanding of teachers in Vietnam. Few would respond to written questionnaires or be interviewed formally. Nevertheless those instructors who chose to respond to inquiries of their profession, specifically English language training, did so with great candor and openness. Their opinions offer important insights into education in the developing world in general and the current challenges Doi Moi places upon them in Ho Chi Minh City. A common theme was the lack of teaching aids, i.e. not enough tape recorders, video machines and reading material. Another issue was class size and the need to reduce it. As well, there seemed to be a self-consciousness on the part of some instructors concerning their own teaching ability. A 40 year instructor who had been teaching for eighteen years commented:

> The greatest challenge English teachers face in Vietnam today is how to be a good teacher, an attractive teacher and can keep the students. It makes me try very hard in teaching and learning new courses and I cannot teach carelessly. My humour and fame and name go together in my teaching. So I always do my best to teach well.[6]

The vast majority of these instructors have never been out of Vietnam or have had the opportunity to work with a native English speaker. While their general ability in English is adequate, it has been observed that their cultural knowledge in relation to English is lacking. While the issue of teacher training in Vietnam is a large and complex subject, there is clearly an unsurprising deficiency of emphasis on English as a cultural reality in itself as opposed to a device of intercultural communication.

The issue of communicative competency was addressed by one instructor who felt that

> The greatest challenge English teachers face in Vietnam today is how to make their students speak English fluently and correctly. In order to do that, they must give their students many listening lessons. They must give their students many opportunities to speak or to practice with foreigners so that they can be used to local accents.[4]

The identification of improving English by speaking with "foreigners" is highly indicative of Vietnam's current social and economic climate and one that has directly affected language training. The ability of instructors to promote this vital link in learning English will be one of their greatest responsibilities as the Doi Moi Era progresses.

SAIGON FOREIGN LANGUAGE SCHOOL

47 Nguyen Cu Trinh
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Tel.: 397694

Like the Dong Khoi English Language Center, the Saigon Foreign Language School commenced operation in 1989 at the outset of the Doi Moi Era and like Dong Khoi is one of the largest schools of its kind in Ho Chi Minh City. In addition to offering English language instruction, the Saigon Foreign Language School also includes Chinese and French in its curriculum, though English is unquestionably the most popular language being studied. The institution had recently employed a native French speaker in its French language program. The Saigon Foreign Language School has four different centres operating in Ho Chi Minh City, most of these being in the downtown area of District 1.

The central campus on 47 Nguyen Cu Trinh Street (which is the subject of this chapter) currently offers language study to 1579 students. Utilizing 22 classrooms on three floors there are roughly 15-25 students per class with a total teaching staff of 61 instructors. Classes are available throughout the day.

Materials

The Saigon Foreign Language School's main texts are Streamline English, Person to Person and Headway. The school emphasizes that it uses both American and British Streamline English series though the audiotapes available are read by British speakers. The Headway series is thoroughly British in content and much more grammar-oriented than the Streamline series.

Like other language schools, the Saigon Foreign Language School makes audiotape players available to its instructors. It was observed that some teachers speak into microphones attached to the machines in an attempt to amplify their voice in the class and to get students to speak into the microphone. Considering that there are rarely more than twenty students in one class the use of microphones may not always be meaningful.

One video machine is available in the school but a unique aspect of this institution is its Language Lab where up to twenty-five students can individually listen to language tapes on their own. Whether such facilities make a measurable impact on student linguistic ability is debateable. However, the centre advertises its Language Lab in an attempt to attract new students and the reality of such relatively new materials at language schools in Ho Chi Minh City becomes an important element in how such institutions will project themselves to the public.

Curriculum

The Saigon Foreign Language School does not emphasize preparation for the Foreign Language Certificates offered by the Department of Education. The institution sees itself primarily offering students the opportunity to improve their English through the Streamline English series. Because the school is not relying on the Department of education to determine student proficiency, The Saigon Foreign Language School has created in-school written and oral examinations which reflect a twenty unit section of one of the four volumes within the English Streamline series. Students are required to pass such examinations before proceeding on to the next twenty units within the volume.

Because the school does not define itself as a program aimed at preparing students for the language certificates, its learning program can offer courses not normally associated with other language schools. English for Children, English for Business and other programs reflect different educational needs to which the Do Moi Era has responded.

The table below outlines the curriculum design of The Saigon Foreign Language School, delineating time allotted for each section of the Streamline series. While the institution uses the essential text the foreign language certificates are based on, it is not explicitly preparing its students for those certificates.

Table 2. -- CURRICULUM DESIGN OF SAIGON FOREIGN LANGUAGE SCHOOL

CHILDREN LEVEL	COMBINED LEVEL	CONVERSATION LEVEL	GENERAL LEVEL	SPECIAL LEVEL	CHINESE
45 hr/course	**Beginner National Program English for Today 45 hr/course**		**Program by National Department of Education 45 hr/course**	**Economic/Commerce 36 hr/course**	**Chinese 36 hr/course**
1. Book: Muzzy in Gondo Land Beginner 1: Book 1 Beginner 2: Book 2 Beginner 3: Book 3 **2. Welcome to English** English for Children 45 hrs/course Course 1: L1 -14/81 Course 2: L15-24/81 Course 3: L1 -15/82 Course 4: L16-36/82 Course 5: L1 -15/83 Course 6: L16-30/83 Course 7: L1 -7/84 Course 8: L8-15/84 Course 9: L1 -7/85 Course 10: L8-15/85	**First Things First: 45 hrs** Combination 1: L1-44 Combination 2: L45-94 Combination 3: L95-144 **Practice & Progress** Combination 4: L1-16 Combination 5: L17-32 Combination 6: L33-48 Combination 7: L49-64 Combination 8: L65-80 Combination 9: L81 -90 **Developing Skills** Combination 10: L1-10 Combination 11: L11 -20 Combination 12: L21-30 Combination 13: L31-40	**Streamline 45 hrs** **Streamline Departures** Conversation 1: Unit 1-20 Conversation 2: Unit 21-40 Conversation 3: Unit 41-60 Conversation 4: Unit 61-80 **Streamline Connections** Conversation 5: Unit 1-20 Conversation 6: Unit 21-40 Conversation 7: Unit 41-60 Conversation 8: Unit 61-80 **Streamline Directions** Conversation 1: Unit 1-16 Conversation 2: Unit 17-32 Conversation 3: Unit 33-48 Conversation 4: Unit 49-64 Conversation 5: Unit 65-80 **Streamline Destinations**	English 6 English 7 English 8 English 9 English 10 English 11 English 12 **Grammar Translation** Special Program of the Centre	**Combined with other Courses:** - We Mean Business - We're in Business - Good for Business - English for the Office **First Period** Business Contacts BE 101 Unit 1-10 BE 102 Unit 11-15 BE 103 Unit 06-15 **Second Period** Special Business Companies Investment Commerce Mailing	Basic Chinese Program 307 Chinese for Conversation **Work in the Office:** Deals, agreement Investment Liquidation Insurance Damages Arrival Handling Shipping

The above table continues to underline current themes present in curriculum development in language schools in Ho Chi Minh City. The unavoidable and almost complete dependence on available materials is again present at this institution. But while the Streamline series is the bedrock of language training at The Saigon Foreign Language School, the other features of its curriculum design make it unique among many other foreign language schools. In addition to offering programs for children, the existence of English language training relating specifically to a business context is significant. It is a clear reflection of how independent educators in Ho Chi Minh City recognize the effects of a changing social climate on local education. However, it should be made clear that the advertising of such programs does not necessarily guarantee their existence and that a minimal number of students are required for the successful implementation of such courses.

Of the four skills of language training there seems to be a deficiency of emphasis on writing in the classroom. Again, continuous emphasis on available reading materials seems to detract from the crucial aspect of communicative competency . In the absence of native English speaking teachers (the participation of a native French instructor at this institution is highly unusual), foreign language schools must cling to whatever learning resources are available. Though it is significant that more and more language textbooks are available in Ho Chi Minh City, curriculum design at English centres, as evident at The Saigon Foreign Language School, continue to reflect an almost complete dependence on available written materials.

Teaching Methodology

Classes observed at The Saigon Foreign Language School in Ho Chi Minh City in the summer of 1994 suggested some of that institution's current themes of teaching methodology. As could be expected, the Audio-Lingual Method was in evidence in many classes. However, there did seem to be a greater effort made by some instructors to require students to draw from their own experiences in relation to the text in question. This seemed to suggest that the teachers were attempting to use content as a vehicle for class discussion. One instructor when faced with Unit 65 of the Destinations volume of the Streamline series, entitled "Seeing the Doctor", chose to ask students about health care in Vietnam and how doctors perform in their own community. He would then return to the text and deal with the lesson.

Generally speaking, instructors at The Saigon Foreign Language School worked with three different strategies: 1) Audio-Lingual (ALM) 2) Drills and 3) Drawing on student experience to generate class discussion and promote comprehension. Few schools in Ho Chi Minh City dictate to instructors what methodology to use and it would seem that what will be effective is largely left to the individual instructor.

Drills, one of the strategies identified, related to substitution drills of pronouns, days of the week and other items. An instructor might write on the board "What are you going to do next weekend?", circle "you" and require students to substitute for that word "he", "she", "they" and "we". ALM was utilized again after that as the class would repeat the teacher's utterances of the new sentences. It was this instructor in fact who used the microphone in the class as a way to emphasize the listen-and-respond relationship he had created with his students.

A unique opportunity to observe children and pre-teenagers arose through a class of fifteen students ranging in age from possibly eight or nine to perhaps sixteen. While the teacher was, as expected, working with the Streamline English series, she created a dynamic in her class not normally observed. By getting the students to discuss different types of food (related to a restaurant dialogue in the text), dealing with specific vocabulary and having students come to the board and write such, a higher level of class engagement was observed. Admittedly, a more than usual amount of Vietnamese was spoken yet the class itself seemed to display a greater dynamism than most others.

It should be noted that some teachers in Ho Chi Minh City write English words on blackboards with phonetic transcriptions in brackets. It is unlikely such transcriptions are meaningful to students. Some teachers were observed writing a Vietnamese word beside its English equivalent and then placing that word in brackets and writing its phonetic transcription. Most teacher trainers discourage such practices.

Teaching methodology at this institution suggested similarities with the previous school discussed while at the same time incorporating different teaching styles which might be assumed to lead to a greater communicative competency.

Student Profile

Observations of students made at this institution continue to suggest themes regarding English language proficiency and attitudes of foreign language students in Ho Chi Minh City. At the intermediate level, students are able to converse in English to a satisfactory degree. Specific linguistic problems identified were similar to those identified at the Dong Khoi English Language Center. While English and Vietnamese may share a common Latin alphabet, differences in pronunciation are radical and students continue to struggle. Lack of native English speaking teachers can only continue this problem. On average, listening skills, reading skills and pronunciation are adequate.

Written responses by students to questionnaires were shorter in length and seemed to suggest a lesser confidence with written English than among students questioned at the preceding institution. It seemed students had difficulty in understanding key questions. "How long have you been attending this school?" was often responded with "first time," students not comprehending a time duration implied. Longer essay questions were avoided altogether by many and other students seemed to have difficulty to respond in complete sentences. Nevertheless, students who did respond seemed to reiterate previous themes identified by other foreign language students in Ho Chi Minh City. A 31 year old single engineer commented:

> Nowadays, English become the most important language. Speaking English very well to help us apply the job easier, especially with foreigner company. In my opinion, language school has got many helpful. First, you can learn alot of

> vocabularies, grammatical rules etc. Second, you practice what you study, how to write correct English. At least, they help you to widen your skills in listening, speaking etc.[1]

Many of the respondents were under the age of thirty but unlike at Dong Khoi, most had been attending The Saigon Foreign Language School for less than one year, some for only six months. As at Dong Khoi, many had studied English in high school though, unlike Dong Khoi, cost of books and tuition was reported often to be in excess of 120,000 Vietnamese Dong for one month. The reasons for attending this particular institution often revolved around the fact that it was in their local neighborhood, though if students studying French were to be interviewed, undoubtedly the availability of a native French speaker would be a prime motive for attending this particular school. A 27 year old student who had been learning English for two years commented:

> I'm student. I think that four English skills are important but I'm very bad in listening skills. I want to practice listening skills and I think this course will be helpful to me.[2]

Student proficiency in English at The Saigon Foreign Language School as well as attitudes and expectations of foreign language training continue to suggest that most students believe their education at these centres perform a meaningful role in their education and will aid them in their future career goals. Most students expressed an appreciation for the particular institution they were attending. It may be presumed that interviews conducted with students studying other languages would produce similar results.

Teacher Profile

The Saigon Foreign Language School's campus on Cu Trinh Street currently employs 61 instructors. The majority of instructors are male. A unique aspect of the teaching body is that some instructors have studied in English speaking countries. The words "Australia", "New Zealand", and "U.S.A." are featured prominently on the signs outside the school denoting where certain teachers had lived or studied. One instructor was a former airline pilot who had lived in the United States for three years and while lacking the formal teacher training of his co-workers, clearly spoke English infinitely better than most teachers at the school. Many teachers are graduates of the University of Education of Ho Chi Minh City.

As at the Dong Khoi English Language Centre, the age of the instructors at The Saigon Foreign Language School ranges from 23 to 58. Some teachers possess graduate degrees from American institutions. Without question, the most unique English language instructor at the school is not Vietnamese but a Phillipino woman who has been teaching at the institution for over half a year. Because she does not speak Vietnamese, her class is the only one at the school conducted completely in English. As a fluent English-speaking Asian working in Vietnam, her comments are particularly insightful:

> As a foreign English teacher, I met most difficulties in trying to elaborate on some points in the discussion since most of the students lack enough vocabulary to understand an idea. In general, communication barrier serves as the greatest challenge to me. . .apparently there are good English teachers in Vietnam. . .except that

> not all of them are given the chance to upgrade their knowledge and also most of them are "underestimated" (or the job is not financially rewarding) [3]

The instructor illuminates many issues for language teachers in Vietnam; poor financial compensation not being the least among them. But more importantly, the recognition of the importance of upgrading skills, it is largely agreed, is a crucial element in effective teaching in any discipline and one that continues to be lacking in Vietnam.

The instructor who was a former airline pilot noted:

> Most Vietnamese teachers of English nowadays are young and inexperienced or if they are old enough, they are too conservative. They have never got any training in an English speaking country; they teach only what they have learned at university, their teaching is therefore more or less limited. Refresher courses or seminars should be given to teachers regularly so that they might learn about new techniques or development in their field. On the other hand, Vietnamese learners need native teachers of English so that they can have a better listening comprehension and correct pronunciation of the language. Local teachers might also look to these foreign teachers for help whenever a difficulty arises. [4]

The identification of the need for native English-speaking teachers is an unquestionable reflection of the current challenges English language teachers face in Ho Chi Minh City. Written comments by other instructors at The Saigon Foreign Language School affirm this concern.

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION FOREIGN LANGUAGE NIGHT CENTRE NO. 8

390 Hoang Van Thu
Tan Binh District
Ho Chi Minh City

We have seen how in the wake of Doi Moi a new surge of independent-oriented language schools have joined the ranks of other enterprises in Vietnam capitalizing on the new opportunities the government's policy has created. An interesting dimension to this new dynamism in education has been the creation of similar-type language schools organized and conducted by institutions of higher learning as opposed to those of independent local educators. Such schools represent a significant aspect to language training in Ho Chi Minh City, offering students a greater perceived access to more highly qualified instructors.

The University of Education of Ho Chi Minh City, the community's leading teacher-training program (quite possibly the best in the country), has, in the last five years, opened its own night centres offering language training to the general public and in addition preparing students for the institution's own language examinations outlined in Chapter Two of this study. The distinction between language centres administered by The University of Education and language centres administered by local educators is significant. Opportunities for the general public to work with institutions of higher learning whose examinations are more highly regarded represent not only a higher level of learning but also, a social distinction between students who choose to attend such schools and other who attend centres not affiliated with institutions of higher learning.

The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 8, like many other schools of its kind, rents out class space from a high school and has been in operation since the outset of the Doi Moi Era. Approximately 2000 students are currently enrolled at this centre. Utilizing 22 classrooms on three floors, there are roughly 30-35 students per class with a total teaching staff of 45 instructors. Classes are available only in the evening.

Materials

As with almost every foreign language centre in Ho Chi Minh City, The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 8's main text is Streamline English. Practice and Progress is also used. As with many other language schools in Ho Chi Minh City, instructors have available to them audiotape machines which they can use to play cassettes of the Streamline series. It has been suggested that teachers at this institution might be creating their own materials to a greater degree than instructors at other schools. Such original materials, however, were not observed. It is unclear whether video machines are available or used in the classroom.

In terms of materials available, The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 8 continues to use materials similar to those used in most centres in Ho Chi Minh City underlining the previously cited dependence on available texts.

Curriculum

The mandate of The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 8 is to improve students' general ability with English. Some students take the University of Education language examinations while it has been estimated that 40% of students take no examinations at all. The 60% of students who do write the exams normally write tests organized by the university itself. The table below outlines this institution's learning strategy for its students. While similarities with the proceeding schools may seem obvious, the added program of "Listening and Speaking Level B" is unique.

Table 3. -- CURRICULUM DESIGN OF UNIVERSITY NIGHT CENTRE NO. 8

BASIC ENGLISH

Streamline English

Introduction	Lessons	1-15	Immersion Class 1	Book I DEPARTURES
Level 1		16-36		
Level 2		37-59	Immersion Class 2	
Level 3		60-80		
Level 4	Lessons	1-20	Immersion Class 3	Book II CONNECTIONS
Level 5		21-40		
Level 6		41-60	Immersion Class 4	
Level 7		61-80		

Students will have to take the National Test (Level A) at the end of the course. Certificates will be issued by the Teachers' College.

INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH

Streamline English Book III Destinations

Level 1	Lessons 1-16
Level 2	Lessons 17-32
Level 3	Lessons 33-48
Level 4	Lessons 49-64
Level 5	Lessons 65-80

Students will have to take The National Test (Level B) at the end of the course.

LISTENING AND SPEAKING LEVEL B

- Special training for listening and speaking skills
- For students already finished Streamline Book 2
- Programme includes the following courses:
    - Crosstalk
    - Around Town
    - Kernel
    - Cambridge English Language Training
    - Short Stories

The availability and use of the Cambridge language course is an interesting dimension to the school's overall curriculum design which is thoroughly British in content.

In terms of the Four Skills of language training, we may assume, as in other institutions, that the dependence on materials at this school would result in a diminished communicative competency among its students. However, as we shall see, this institution's greatest asset is not its materials nor its curriculum design but rather, its teaching staff. It would seem that a comparison of curriculum designs at dozens of foreign language schools in Ho Chi Minh City would lead us to believe that because Streamline English is the bedrock of all such schools, the opportunity for student growth in the areas that the text does not address would be limited. While the University of Education Night Centre No. 8's learning strategy seems almost identical to that of other schools, the institution recognizes the limitations that lack of resources place upon education in Ho Chi Minh City and therefore is better able to focus on the substance of its texts rather than pursuing a purely administrative approach to education. This would suggest that to place added value on an institution's curriculum design would be to overlook the content of its classes. While the preceding table does not outline time duration for individual sections of the curriculum, it does offer added programs such as enhanced speaking and listening classes.

Teaching Methodology

Classes observed at the University of Education Night Centre No. 8 in the summer of 1994 seemed to contrast with earlier methodologies observed at other institutions. While the Audio-Lingual Method is still in evidence, the individual instructor incorporated a variety of techniques and rituals in the classroom. The use of individual silent reading of text was much more evident than at other schools. As well, there seemed a far greater desire among instructors to verify student comprehension of the text. The teacher would continually question an individual student on the passage even once an accepted understanding had been established.

Instructors commonly chose to reinforce meaning among students through such questioning. Sometimes the class as a whole would respond to the teacher's questions. As well, there seemed to be hardly any students working at the blackboard and many classes in fact had the instructor speaking little if no Vietnamese. Instructors commonly asked students to speak louder and discouraged them from reciting the text word-for-word. Admittedly, some students were quite shy and felt slightly overwhelmed by what was being asked of them. Some students were required to stand in front of the class and conduct oral presentations.

The use of metalanguage in the classroom seemed more evident than at other schools. One teacher was explicit with terms such as "noun" and "gerund", requiring students to identify incorrect sentences on the board using such language. Problematic vocabulary was identified on the blackboard where the teacher would indicate whether certain words were adjectives, nouns or adverbs. After vocabulary and grammar points had been identified, the teacher would then play the audiotapes of the unit in question and have students in two's or as a whole work with the passage. While the Audio-Lingual Method is present, it seems to be manifested less often in a single class than at other schools. While individual teaching styles are present, the overall teaching methodology at this institution seems to shift the emphasis away from text, toward a greater teacher-student interaction, though, again, all classes were observed using the Streamline series for a significant period of time.

No organized learning activities were observed which departed from the text. As opposed to being the bedrock of the methodology, the Audio-Lingual Method seemed to serve as one option in an instructor's overall teaching style. The extent to which this promotes more communicative speaking has not been ascertained though it may be assumed that because students rely less on recitation of their texts, they are given more opportunity to communicate more freely.

Student Profile

Observations of students made at The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 8 reflect a working aptitude with English. Pronunciation is intelligible and while many students seem somewhat shy about speaking, their presentations in terms of stress and accent is adequate. Some linguistic obstacles that were identified at the Dong Khoi English Language Centre were also present at this institution.

However, the overall student makeup at this school seems slightly different than most others. While the majority of students are in their early twenties, there was a more than average number of students over the age of thirty. Like other schools, nearly all students live in the immediate area of the school yet the time that students had invested at this particular institution varied considerably. Some students had just started while other had been in attendance at Night Centre No. 8 for two years. There did not seem to be a consistent time investment of the students at this school.

Responses to written inquiries again illuminated perceptions and attitudes of foreign language students in Ho Chi Minh City. Older students offered unique perspectives. A 34 year old woman who teaches Vietnamese literature in high school and had completed her B Level certificate commented:

> When I am learning English, I find my life is more happier. I like reading English story in order to know about England and English literature. It is very difficult to learn English but I think I can do that. I want to learn English to improve my life. I wish to introduce the culture of my country to English too.[1]

Such comments obviously indicate how available texts dictate one specific English language culture and how some students may not have greater exposure in understanding how English is manifested in a variety of contexts. Nevertheless, this student recognizes how language training serves as a vehicle for intercultural understanding and growth. Her desire to interact with native English speakers is shared among many students and teachers. She continues:

> I am a teacher of literature. I teach Vietnamese literature. I think if I learn English, I can read book in English. I want to know about the culture of England. Beside, I wish to be a teacher of English so I have to try learning very much. . .I must learn myself although this language school has been helpful to me a lot.[2]

Most respondents were able to answer questions more effectively than previous respondents; their grammatical accuracy and ability to convey meaning were evident. The vast majority of students questioned successfully completed the three page questionnaires and were able to conduct simple conversations with the author. As well, cost of books and tuition was comparable to that of other similar foreign language schools in Ho Chi Minh City. While most students acknowledged a quality teaching staff, the majority of respondents chose to attend The University of Education Night Centre No. 8 because it was in their neighborhood. There seemed to be an inconsistency among students as to what aspect of the school program helped them the most. While many identified that grammar was the most helpful skill, others commented that listening and speaking were the most important. As might be expected, the identification of writing skills as the weakest aspect of the program was observed.

While the students at this particular institution were not radically different from the others, they did seem to convey a somewhat higher linguistic and social status. If it is true that the University of Education certificate program is more stringent than the Departmentof Education examinations, the students who attend foreign language centres organized by institutions of higher learning might claim a superior education in foreign language training in Ho Chi Minh City. The reasons, however, for studying English seem consistent among all students in the area. A 22 year old male engineer studying English at Night Centre No. 8 seemed to capture the very essence of why the Vietnamese today are learning English so voraciously:

> English is good for me to work well. I'm an engineer and of course I have to study English. English helps me speaking to foreigners, understanding them well and then I can help my company to encourage foreign companies investing on Vietnam . . .there are alot of foreigners at my company. I want them to understand me in English. That is very good for me to do my work well.[3]

Teacher Profile

The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 8 currently employs 42 instructors; fourteen male and twenty-five female.

Ninety-five per cent of instructors are university graduates; ten per cent are also employed by the University of Education directly. While the vast majority of instructors are graduates of The University of Education, roughly half a dozen are graduates of the general English program at the University of Ho Chi Minh City, a program that does not address foreign language teaching methodology. Two instructors are graduates of a teacher training college geared toward high school instruction. It has been estimated that the average length of teaching experience for the teaching body at this institution is six years, slightly less than average compared to those at other institutions. The age of the instructors ranges from 23 to 47 with many teachers having previous exposure to native English speaking communities and individuals. One teacher was in fact a graduate of the Vietnamese American Association in Saigon prior to 1975.

Instructors identified many challenges that the present educational structure places on them. As may be expected, student overpopulation, lack of resources, limited facilities and inadequate financial compensation seemed prominent. Some teachers had difficulty motivating some students to learn English and spoke of a "motive power" in their classroom. In terms of actual content of classes, a 24 year old instructor who had been teaching for only eight months was remarkably eloquent:

> As years pass, there have been great changes in English words, English grammar as well as way of life in England. But some of the Vietnamese teachers especially young teachers just pass down to their students the knowledge they acquired a long time ago. Certainly they can give the students some updates knowledge but what they know is nothing in comparison with the great changes in England nowadays.[4]

Again, this constant identification with England as the sole representative of the English language is to be expected in the context of materials that are exclusively British in origin. In addition to helping people learn English, such texts indirectly promote a cultural distancing between England's cultural heritage and other English-speaking societies. This results in students and teachers being preoccupied with such narrowly defined cultural sources as the Streamline English series. The instructor quoted above offers some suggestions to upgrade teaching skills:

> English teachers [in Vietnam] should usually read books, newspapers etc., listen to the radio and try to find opportunities of meeting foreigners to have full updated knowledge not only of our country but also of foreign countries. Furthermore, the English teachers should be given as many chances to go abroad especially to England as possible.[5]

A 33 year old instructor who has been teaching for ten years makes an observation that is fundamental to the present situation:

> I'd like to get some help from the other professional organizations in foreign countries for teaching English more effectively in the needs of English learners in Vietnam nowadays.[6]

In addition to just having exposure to native English-speaking people, this instructor realizes the importance of interaction with professional organizations not just to help teach students, but to assist in teacher training and upgrading. While some groups from Australia are aiding in teaching training at the present time, the opportunity for full interaction among Vietnamese and foreign professional educational organizations is one that must be exploited, as this teacher has correctly observed.

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION FOREIGN LANGUAGE NIGHT CENTRE NO. 11

222 Le Van Sy
District 3
Ho Chi Minh City
Tel.: 35020

Currently, The University of Education operates half a dozen foreign language centres in Ho Chi Minh City; numbers associated with these centres do not denote the total number of the schools. The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 11 is perhaps one of the largest schools of its kind in Ho Chi Minh City. A three story rectangular block with dozens of classrooms, the student population of 4000 was the largest recorded in this study. The centre commenced operation in May of 1992 and, while also offering instruction in French and Chinese, 90% of the students at the centre are studying English. The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 11 currently employs seventy instructors, sixty of whom are teaching English. It should be noted that the University of Education receives no funding from the federal government to operate these night centres that are open to the general public.

The director of the centre brings unique background and experience to her position. Head of the English Department of the University of Education, she has studied both Russian and English in the former Soviet Union for six years and as well has spent one year of English language study in Australia. Representing the preeminent teaching -trainer program in Vietnam, her demonstrated linguistic skills were beyond reproach, investing a genuine dynamism into this particular night centre which she directs.

Materials

As may be expected, the University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 11 uses Streamline English as its main text. Like other language schools, New Concept is also used and it appears that the Cambridge course might be utilized more often than at other centres.

University of Education night centres use common newspaper advertisements for their centres. Such advertisements describe the availability of videomachines and language videos though it is unclear if such resources are present at all of the evening centres the University operates. In terms of materials available, this particular institution bears no striking difference from others of its kind. It seems odd that many students and teachers interviewed at these language schools comment on the wide number of language books available for English language students in Ho Chi Minh City. It is true that any large bookstore in the community will contain a significant number of different kinds of items for language instruction. However, almost all language schools observed in Ho Chi Minh City seem to cling tenaciously to the Streamline series. It was observed earlier that the reason for this lay in the fact that the Department of Education examinations, which a great many students in the city will prepare for, are modeled to a large extent on this popular British text. The question arises as to the learning potential of any large student body if only one text is utilized. This does not reflect necessarily on the availability of only one text, but rather a policy decision on the part of local educators to use the Streamline series as the essential written material of their program.

Curriculum

The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 11 offers three languages of study: English, French and Chinese. It appears to have one of the more organized and in-depth French language programs in the city. Unlike the Dong Khoi English Language Centre, Night Centre No. 11 does not define its English language course of study as a program intended for preparing students for local board of education examinations (though such courses are available), but rather sees itself promoting students' general ability with English. The table below outlines The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 11's curriculum design.

Table 4. -- CURRICULUM DESIGN OF UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION NIGHT CENTRE NO. 11

I. BASIC ENGLISH

A. Regular courses 36 hours
Introduction: Units 1-17
Beginner 1: Units 18-38
Beginner 2: Units 39-59
Beginner 3: Units 60-80
} Streamline Departures
Beginner 4: Units 1-20
Beginner 5: Units 21-40
Beginner 6: Units 41-60
Beginner 7: Units 61-80
} Streamline Connections

B. Intensive Course
Form 1 Total: 54 hrs.
Step 1: Units 1-40
Step 2: Units 41-80
} Streamline Departures
Step 3: Units 1-40
Step 4: Units 41-80
} Streamline Connections

Form 2 Total: 108 hours
Step 1: Streamline Departures
Step 2: Streamline Connections

Form 3 Total: 72 hours
(Same as form 1)

II. INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH

Regular Course 36 hours
Level 1: Units 1-16
Level 2: Units 17-32
Level 3: Units 33-48
Level 4: Units 49-64
Level 5: Units 65-80
} Streamline Destinations

IIII. ADVANCED ENGLISH

Level 1: Units 1-12
Level 2: Units 13-24
Level 3: Units 25-36
Level 4: Units 37-48
Level 5: Units 49-60
} Streamline Destinations

IV. CHINESE

A. Basic Chinese: Conversational Chinese 301 sentences
Beginner 1: Lessons 1-10
Beginner 2: Lessons 11-20
Beginner 3: Lessons 21-30
Beginner 4: Lessons 31-40

B. Intermediate Chinese
Level 1: Lessons 1-6
Level 2: Lessons 7-12
Level 3: Lessons 13-18
Level 4: Lessons 19-25
Level 5: Lessons 26-30

V. FRENCH

Sans Frontieres and the New Sans Frontieres
A. Beginner: Book 1: 6 courses
(36 hours/course)
1. Level 1: Unit 1 Lessons 1-4
2. Level 2: Unit 1 Lessons 5 Review
Unit 2 Lessons 1-2
3. Level 3 Unit 2 Lessons 3 Review
4. Level 4: Unit 3 Lessons 1-4
5. Level 5: Unit 3 Lessons 5 Review
Unit 4 Lessons 1-2
6. Level 6: Unit 4 Lessons 3 Review

B. Intermediate: Book 2: 6 courses
(36 hours/course)
1. Level 1: Unit 1 Lessons 1-4
2. Level 2: Unit 1 Lessons 5
Unit 2 Lessons 1-2
3. Level 3: Unit 2 Lesson 3
4. Level 4: Unit 3 Lessons 1-4
5. Level 5: Unit 3 Lessons 5 Review
(Bright Stars Affairs)
6. Level 6: Bright Stars Affairs continue

C. Advanced: Book 3: 4 courses
(54 hours/course)
1. Level 1: Lessons 1-2
2. Level 2: Lessons 3-4
3. Level 3: Lessons 5-6
4. Level 4: Lessons 7-8

Many schools observed in Ho Chi Minh City did not appear to offer the type of intensive language course featured at this institution. Fifty-four hours to absorb the entire first two volumes of the Streamline series is allocated for its intensive course program. Over 100 hours are reserved to deal with the remainder of the series. Apart from its intensive program, Night Centre No. 11's learning strategy for its students continues earlier themes identified regarding curriculum design. To à large extent, text dictates the structure of learning. The completion of units within the text becomes the prime determiner of learning achieved.

Teaching Methodology

Classes observed at The University of Education Night Centre No. 11 incorporated a range of individual teaching styles which were not always consistent with teaching methodologies observed at the Night Centre No. 8. Teachers seemed to have a greater desire to offer phonetic transcriptions of vocabulary on the blackboard (one teacher, before uttering a word to her class, made a vertical column of fourteen lexical items with corresponding phonetic equivalents) and generally speaking, seemed more grammar-oriented. However, a common concern of both schools was a continuing desire to evaluate the reading and listening comprehension of their students. One instructor, when utilizing the audiotape of a unit within the Streamline series, would stop the tape after every single line of dialogue and ask her students what they had just heard. This persistent comprehension questioning was not found in the majority of schools observed.

The use of the Audio-Lingual Method was present at this institution as it is at many others in Ho Chi Minh City. Instructors were observed having students repeat lines from the tape as well as repeating teacher recitations of blackboard work. The Audio-Lingual Method does not seem to take prominence as a teaching methodology but is still used considerably in the class. Some instructors used Vietnamese more often than teachers at other institutions to predominately intermediate classes.

A significant observation was recorded when one instructor asked her students to "practice with your friends". This desire to create a communal environment and have students help each other in their language study was rarely observed at other institutions. That same instructor also employed a teaching technique not found at any other language school where she would reproduce text onto the blackboard but omit key words of the sentences. She would then speak the complete sentences from the board and have students repeat. Translations of certain lines of dialogue into Vietnamese were observed. The students would then translate those lines back into English. The preceding activity was denoted as "Exercise #1". The teacher then proceeded to her second exercise relating to the unit of the text where she would write on the board three lexical items from the text. Students were to close their books and, using the words on the blackboard as a way to connect dialogue, recite the text with the teacher's assistance after she had erased the words from the blackboard. It is unclear what the goal of such activities would be if not to aid students in the memorization of the text. Certainly a strong reinforcement of the vocabulary was achieved and the class itself seemed less teacher-fronted.

Instructors by and large were perceived to be more exact and dynamic in their classes than at other schools. Still, the preponderance of phonetic transcription and the unusual amount of Vietnamese spoken communicated an almost academic approach to the language. At the same time, instructors were observed having students work amongst themselves attempting to fuse a Vietnamese cultural perspective into the materials being used. Placing that fact next to the reality that audiotapes being used are incorporating very difficult British accents and that the text itself might also be seen as a British cultural studies course, the attempt to make written material meaningful to students by placing it within their own experiences is highly praiseworthy; it represents one of the best teaching devices used in promoting reading skills in Vietnam today.

Summarizing the general trends of teaching methodology at the University of Education's Night Centre No. 11, it can be stated that the instructor will outline problematic vocabulary, read the passage in question, incorporate the Audio-Lingual Method at that juncture and proceed to determine student comprehension through questioning of text. Such generalizations, however, cannot convey individual teaching strategies when seen in the context of a superior teacher training program such as the University of Education. Careful examination of teaching methodology at any institution must recognize such variants.

Student Profile

No discernible differences were observed between students at this institution and the preceeding one. However, written responses seemed less exact and students overall appeared to be less forthcoming about their background and educational goals. A significant number of students were over thirty, similar to Night Centre No. 8. Most students felt satisfied with the instruction they were receiving at this institution and like other students, believed their language study would aid them in their chosen careers.

No significant distinctions were observed in English proficiency between these students and those at other institutions. Linguistic obstacles unique to the Vietnamese were again observed, though the students, generally speaking, were able to conduct conversations and be understood. Cost of books and tuition were comparable to those of other schools and the fact that the school was nearby was frequently cited by students as a prime reason for attending it. Writing, again, was cited as the weakest aspect of the program with grammar and conversation deemed more significant by students.

A 28 year old single man, who had left university in 1986 said

> I really want to become a translator because I like go round and there in my country or in the world and at this time English language very helpful to me. Therefore, almost the foreigner they come here are speaks in English.[1]

Student observations at the University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 11 confirmed earlier themes identified regarding the overall attitudes and expectations of foreign language students in Ho Chi Minh City. Again, the growing international population in the city was recognized by many students as being an important new reality in their lives, not only affecting the socio-economic climate of their country, but also inspiring them, to a large degree, to pursue language study and attain a higher employability.

Teacher Profile

The University of Education Foreign Language Night Centre No. 11 currently employs seventy instructors; thirty male and forty female. Fifty of these instructors are graduates of The University of Education of Ho Chi Minh City and twenty have completed the English program at The University of Ho Chi Minh City. The average number of years of teaching experience for this staff is about seven years. Written responses from instructors (which as in other schools were difficult to obtain) affirmed earlier themes identified by instructors at other schools. Student motivation and limited resources were common concerns. These types of comments were stated by one instructor who was a graduate of the Hanoi Foreign Languages Teachers College and who had

had the unique opportunity to conduct a one year sabbatical at the University of Canberra in Australia. A 55 year old man who has been teaching for 23 years, he writes:

> Condensed and up to date text books are needed . . .too large classes. . .it takes the students at evening classes too long a time to study 'Streamline English' It's a bit old now. . .salary is still low, especially to those who are secondary school teachers.[2]

The theme of student motivation was illuminated by a 29 year old teacher who had been teaching for three years:

> Most of the people who learn English in my class have no time to study their lessons at home so they go to school with "empty" mind. They want to speak fluently but they don't want to practice speaking. Maybe they are too ashamed. I try my best to encourage to practice English in class but sometimes I have not got enough materials for them. And then the classes are too big (about 60 students or more than that).[3]

The issue of multi-level classes seemed to be more strongly articulated by teachers here than at most other language schools. Obviously, class size becomes a chief contributor to the challenges teachers face when dealing with students of many different levels. While many teachers simply called for a decrease in class size, few offered concrete alternatives of how to deal with the present explosion of foreign language schools in Ho Chi Minh City and the large number of attendants that go with it.

OTHER SCHOOLS OBSERVED

This chapter aims to summarize other language schools observed in Ho Chi Minh City. Though opportunities for observation were more limited than at the preceding four centres, each of the schools outlined in this chapter offers another aspect of the ever-changing world of foreign language study in Ho Chi Minh City. While the curriculum designs were not available for all, these schools, nevertheless, reflect the continuing dynamism of language study in Vietnam today.

Dong A Language School

736 Nguyen Trai
District 5
Ho Chi Minh City
Tel.: 557760

No discussion of Ho Chi Minh City would be complete without exploring the community's largest ethnic minority, the Chinese. The Chinese have lived in Vietnam for centuries; indeed, the country itself was essentially a colony of China for nearly one thousand years. Despite persecution following reunification of Vietnam in 1975, the Chinese today represent a large and dynamic cultural group in Vietnam, organizing hospitals, recreational centres and other community services. The Chinese neighborhood of Ho Chi Minh City, Cholon (District 5), is several kilometers away from the city centre and the local community itself is somewhat insulated. It is quite possible that many Chinese residents of Ho Chi Minh City do not even speak Vietnamese on a daily basis.

The Dong A Language School, situated directly in the Chinese community, represents an educational service catering to two distinct cultural groups: Chinese and Vietnamese. Forty per cent of its 300 students are ethnic Chinese and the school itself offers instruction in Chinese and English. Of the twenty instructors, many are Chinese. The school is perhaps one of the few in Ho Chi Minh City that advertise in local Chinese newspapers-the ads of course being in that native language. While the school receives no direct government funding, its government sponsor is in fact The People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, the municipality's governing body.

The Dong A Language School, more precisely known as the Dong A Foreign East Asia School, prepares its students for the Department of education A, B, C examinations and uses, as may be expected, Streamline English. In 1994, it was estimated that nineteen students wrote the A level exams, 67 the B level and 30 the C level examinations. Considering that few people choose to pursue the C level examinations, Dong A's claim that a full 10% of its students do write such tests is unusual. Tape recorders are available in the school for instructors and classes are available throughout the day.

Classes observed at the Dong A Language School identified an individual instructor preparing students for their certificate examinations which the students would take the following week. Individual practice between teacher and student was observed, the teacher asking general lifestyle questions to prepare the student for the conversation requirement of the exam. The teacher would alter tenses in questions and use conditionals in questions i.e. "If you get your certificate, what will you do?" His general pronunciation was good and students seemed engaged.

Most striking about this particular institution, however, was the deafening noise emanating from the street outside and the general disrepair of the facility itself. While previous examinations of language centres in Ho Chi Minh City in this study have focused on materials available and not the general state of the facility, The Dong A Language School may be seen as an indication of how lack of resources to upgrade present conditions can be detrimental to the teaching objectives of the institution. Holes in the walls of the classes could be observed and a general sense of disrepair throughout the three story structure was evident. Because such schools are not the responsibility of the local board of education, it would be wrong to conclude that the Municipality of Ho Chi Minh City is responsible for maintaining language schools in the community. The majority of such schools are private enterprises and therefore are required to undertake their own upgrading.

The following table outlines the curriculum design of the Dong A Language School. Parallels between this school and others examined are evident.

Table 5. -- CURRICULUM DESIGN OF DONG A LANGUAGE SCHOOL

	Class	Streamline English		New Concept English		Listening	
A	1	Units 1-20	Departures	Lessons 1-40	First Things First		
	2	21-40		41-80			
	3	41-60		81-120			
	4	61-80		121-144		Unit 1	Start With Listening
	5	1-15	Connections	+ passages 1-4 Passages 5-20	Practice & Progress	Units 2-3	
	6	16-30		21-35		4-5	
	7	31-45		36-50		6-7	
	8						
B	1	Units 46-60	Connections	Passages 51-65	Practice & Progress	Unit 8	Start With Listening
	2	+ 61-80		66-80		9	
		+ 1-5	Destinations				
	3	6-20		81-96		10	
	4	21-35		21-35	Streamline Destinations	11	
	5	36-50		36-50		12	
	6	51-65		51-65			
	7						
C	1	Units 66-80 – Destinations				Units 1-2	Now Hear This
	2	Passages 1-10	Developing Skills			3-4-5	
	3	11-20				6-7-8	
	4	21-30				9-10-11	
	5	31-40				12-13-14	
	6	41-50				15-16-17	
	7	51-60				18-19-20	
	8						

The Nguyen Du Foreign Language Centre

01 Cong Xa Paris
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Tel.: 222419

The Nguyen Du Foreign Language Centre, named after Vietnam's most famous poet, stands in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City, directly opposite the French cathedral built over a century ago. Renting its facility from a large high school, The Nguyen Du Foreign Language Centre offers instruction to approximately 1200 students using 40 classrooms on three floors. The centre employs 50 instructors. The school teaches English, French and Chinese though like many other schools of its kind, most students study English.

A parallel could be made between the Nguyen Du Foreign Language Centre and The Saigon Foreign Language School. Students at both institutions are not focusing primarily on preparation for the Department of Education examinations. Because of this, the schools create their own in-school examinations. Whereas the Saigon Foreign Language School's tests are offered every three months, The Nguyen Du Foreign Language Centre offers examinations every two months. Texts found at other language schools in Ho Chi Minh City are also found at this institution and the centre also has similar resources available. Classes are available six days a week, primarily in the evening. The school has an additional campus on Dinh Tien Hoang Street, also in District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City.

The Nguyen Du Foreign Language Centre seems almost the prototypical school of its kind in Ho Chi Minh City. In the same way that the Dong Khoi English Language Centre was unique for the organization and availability of its materials to outsiders, the Nguyen Du Foreign Language Centre's lack of written information regarding its curriculum and educational goals is quite typical of many language schools in Ho Chi Minh City.

Tri Dung Business School

6 bis Tong Duc Thang
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Tel.: 222431

The Tri Dung Business School is, without question, the most unique of such language schools identified in this study. Its primary distinction lies in the fact that it is not essentially a language school but is a computer and business education school. Commencing operation in 1989, The Tri Dung Business School currently has 2000 students enrolled in computer training, business education and language study. Computer classes are offered in the day and language study is available in the evening. As a language school, it is essentially a night centre. Of the 30 faculty members, ten are teaching English.

While the Doi Moi Era has certainly introduced the Vietnamese to the concept of international foreign investment in their country and the realities of a business community, it has not affected continuing education to the extent that it has affected the professional training institutions. While all agree English is needed to deal with the new challenges of the era, few programs in Ho Chi Minh City that are available to the general public make a conscious attempt to connect language to the present social climate. While the Tri Dung Business School is offering very similar kinds of language instruction to its students as found in other schools, (again Streamline English is being used), one of its chosen texts is highly unusual and was not found in any other such language school identified in this study. Career Prospects: English for the Business and Commercial World by J.A.Blundell is a language text attempting to fuse linguistic and business knowledge. While it should be understood that similar type texts do exist, most bookshops in Ho Cho Minh City would not carry them nor were they found to be used in the larger foreign language night centres in and around Ho Chi Minh City. While the language study component of the Tri Dung Business School is small, there are students who attend such classes irrespective of the school's business approach. The fact that students are learning English in a business context though they may not be actively pursuing a business career is significant. Recognizing the fact that united Vietnam has never described itself as capitalistic and only now must face a precarious global economy, the social implications of general education programs which aim to recognize and explore such new realities is one of the most striking effects of the Doi Moi policy.

Classes observed at the Tri Dung Business School displayed a more or less grammar-oriented approach to language study. The number of students in such classes was considerably smaller than at other schools. We have seen how the availability of materials at foreign language night centres in Ho Chi Minh City have dictated, to a large degree, how classes will be conducted and what will be learned. We have also seen how so much of what is available in regards to texts focuses in on a narrowly efined English-speaking cultural group. Career Prospects: English for the Business and Commercial World introduces students to a different cultural group namely that of the international businessman, arranging airflights, making business agreements and traveling to many different places. Again, the social implication of introducing students to this radically different culture is an important and clear learning benefit to their own intellectual development in a society that has, until very recently, been one of the most isolated in the world. Such exposure clearly demonstrates the role of language and language study as a device for social and economic education. Tri Dung's text teaches grammar points such as the Simple Past through setting and stories totally alien to most Vietnamese. While the distance for some students to understand and relate to such scenarios may be great, the long term implications of such learning can only aid students in acquiring a better understanding of the "outside world" and their role in it.

However, The Tri Dung Business School suffers problems similar to those of the Nguyen Du Foreign Language Centre, namely a clear lack of organization and direction in its overall curriculum design. As mentioned earlier, such deficiencies seem to highlight more clearly-directed schools such as Dong Khoi. Such problems will present significant obstacles as future educational studies about Vietnam emerge. While the school may be commended for its unique approach to language training (such schools are firmly in the minority in Ho Chi Minh City), it must follow the example of larger and better schools in the area that make a conscious attempt to educate the public about its course offerings, highlighting the organization of its programs which can only add to the credibility of the institution.

CONCLUSIONS

It would be erroneous to view Vietnam as a paradigm of the developing world for several reasons. While the country can claim problems similar to those of other developing nations, Vietnam's central experience, in this century, has been its devastating military conflicts and the political insecurities that followed. In addition, the country's xenophobic foreign policy toward China and the West produced an extremely isolated society whose economic stagnation seemed forever influenced by such attitudes. Few countries in the developing world have suffered such consistent hardship since the end of World War II as have Vietnam and the nations of Indochina. The reunification of Vietnam in 1975 did not bring about the necessary readjustments that would make the country economically viable. As well, natural disasters common to the region could only add to the obstacles that the society faced in terms of restructuring. While the country slipped from view in the western media after 1975, its history did not end.

The history of Vietnam is not a struggle of conquest but rather a struggle for identity. After ceaseless domination and influence by China, Portugal, Japan, France, The United States and the Soviet Union, Vietnam has never had a sense of its own independence in the context of a rapidly changing world. As the 20th century comes to a close, a united Vietnam is embracing former enemies and opposing ideologies in a way to not only increase its own fortunes, but also to enhance its own international standing which is definitely a new phenomenon in the nation's history. The lifting of the U.S. Trade Embargo in 1994 was the single most significant occurrence in Vietnam's post-war international relations. The restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries will firmly close a painful chapter in American history and open more doors for Vietnam's continuing development.

None of this could have happened without "Doi Moi"-Vietnam's policy of renovation and restructuring which has impacted nearly every aspect of Vietnamese society. Indeed, a study such as this, conducted by an independent Western researcher, could scarcely have been possible even four years ago. The availability of Ministry of Education documents as well as access to key officials in local education is all part of a radical reappraisal of Vietnam's relationship with foreigners. Such openness can only improve an outsider's understanding of a terribly complex culture and society.

Before exploring the conclusions of this study, it seems fitting to offer, if only briefly, an understanding of the role of language training in global development as gleaned from this research. It is obvious that the economic revival of Vietnam cannot be separated from the language training of its citizens. While the federal government of Vietnam is eager to trade and invest with other countries and companies, it is only through effective communication that such transactions can occur. As stated in Chapter 2 of this study, there are presently over fifteen hundred local residents of Ho Chi Minh City that are employed by foreign companies. Such employment not only represents an increased standard of living for those individuals, but a confidence invested in the community itself which can only improve the standard of living and opportunities for all. We must place a greater emphasis on language training in development and not be overwhelmed by the images of sustainable development (i.e. agriculture and health care) as the totality of development. While such strategies for development have been crucial for Vietnam's survival, they cannot hope to contribute to an overall economic improvement for the society. Implicit in post-sustainable development are the issues of trade, commerce and a heightened international stature. Such benefits have eluded Vietnam for twenty years and it is only now that the vast human resources of the country are being explored to their maximum. Language training, i.e. inter-cultural training, is an essential tool for such growth.

Language Training in Ho Chi Minh City

We have seen how the policy of Doi Moi has significantly impacted the economy of Vietnam. The social impact of Doi Moi has been no less great, particularly in education. Ho Chi Minh City now has scores of foreign language centres aimed at capitalizing on the new opportunities the government policy has introduced. Education in general has benefited from the new openness and less rigid beauracracy the government has tried to foster. It is clear that Doi Moi has revolutionized foreign language training in Vietnam in three fundamental ways:

1) Availability of foreign teachers and materials
2) Upgrading of foreign language tests
3) Increased opportunities for academics to study abroad

Before we begin to analyze what we have learned of the new foreign language centres in Ho Chi Minh City, let us carefully review how these developments cited above have affected foreign language training in general.

According to the Department of Education and Training of Ho Chi Minh City, no native English-speaking foreigner had the legal right to teach English in Ho Chi Minh City prior to 1990. It has now become a matter of local history that native English-speakers had little or no access to educational institutions in the community. It is simply impossible to minimize the educational value of a native speaker in language study. For years, the Vietnamese had no contact with foreigners in schools or other institutions. For years, English language students could only rely on radio broadcasts and audiotapes to acquire an understanding of correct pronunciation, intonation and stress. The overall effectiveness of any language program that cannot introduce students to accurate speech must be questioned. The reality that foreigners could not participate in the Vietnamese educational system is a direct reflection of government policy representing a desire to limit the population's contact with outsiders.

The fact that as the Doi Moi policy evolves, more foreigners are acquiring access (albeit limited) to Vietnamese schools cannot be overlooked. While other East Asian countries such as Taiwan, Japan and Hong Kong have traditionally been easy opportunities for traveling English teachers, Vietnam has simply not been available for those same purposes. Even with the progress of Doi Moi, tourists are still not permitted to teach English even if hired by local schools. This is an important distinction between Vietnam and other countries in the region. The fact that native English-speakers are allowed to operate at all in the country is still highly significant. It is a development in foreign language education in Vietnam that cannot be overlooked.

The variety of English language materials is another important aspect in understanding how Doi Moi has affected the availability of materials. While it is unclear exactly what was available prior to 1986 in Vietnam, it is evident that the average English language student in Ho Chi Minh City today has more access to different kinds of language books than ever before. While we have identified a paradox in this regard, availability of different books yet a clinging to the Streamline series, the reality of many different texts in the community can only make language training more meaningful and increase students' intercultural awareness.

The upgrading of foreign language examinations, while not a product of Doi Moi, is in itself a reaction to Doi Moi. Increased educational and overseas opportunities have made it necessary for Vietnamese educators to upgrade and improve their methods for verifying progress and learning in education. While more effort needs to be made to completely distinguish between current and past foreign language examinations as organized by the Department of Education and Training of Ho Chi Minh City, the upgrading of language tests represents a clear desire among language educators in Vietnam to create tests which are better prepared to deal with the new challenges the educational system in Vietnam is faced with.

Perhaps no other development relating to education can be as significant as the increased opportunities for educators to study abroad. Those in language training seeking greater access to work in a native-speaking context can now further their own linguistic ability and thereby improve the learning of their students upon the instructor's return to their native country. Presently, Australia has had a significant role in fostering a greater relationship between instructors and teacher-trainers with many Vietnamese studying at major institutions in that country. While the United States, Great Britain and Canada have also nurtured new academic relationships with Vietnam, it is unclear if such relationships are indeed focusing on teaching methodology in language training and other issues that language training raises. Certainly the existence of teacher training programs with Western countries (which had previously been the domain of the Soviet Union and China) is a crucial link in the continuing upgrading and improvement in language training in Vietnam. It simply would not exist as it does today without the impetus of Doi Moi.

Foreign Language Centres in Ho Chi Minh City

Our examination of over half a dozen foreign language centres in Ho Chi Minh City and our understanding of the foreign language examination program of the community can correctly lead us to a better understanding of our central concern. It would seem that foreign language students in Ho Chi Minh City have one or more clear goals:

1) General improvement in their English
2) The attainment of foreign language certificates
3) Employment with foreign companies
4) Desire to increase general knowledge

It is clear that the relationship between the Department of Education and Training of Ho Chi Minh City and the independent-oriented language schools is a significant factor in understanding how curriculum at such centres is determined. The organization of foreign language examinations offered through the Department is an important link to evening centres in the city. Yet paradoxically, some, if not many evening centres, create their own tests and evaluations of student performance. This would seem to suggest that while many such centres require the assistance of the Department of Education to receive licenses, the body itself does not greatly affect those centres if they choose to manifest their independence through their own examinations. It is unclear whether the required observations by the Department of Education have a measurable impact on the educational growth and development of the language schools. Still, an enormous amount of students in Ho Chi Minh City are writing Department of Education examinations which, if nothing else, confirm to potential employers that the individual student has attained some level of language ability.

In terms of the content of classes observed in Ho Chi Minh City, we have already identified several consistencies:

1) The use of the Streamline series
2) The preponderance of the Audio-Lingual Method
3) Limitations placed on instructors

An important question that should be asked is, "Is Communicative Competency an exclusively Western attitude toward language training?" Also, "Does the Audio-Lingual Method promote communicative competency?" Clearly, classes observed in Ho Chi Minh City are not task-oriented. Students are not required to produce or identify anything in English beyond the classroom. Classes are essentially teacher-fronted where the instructor determines (if not dictates) what will happen in the lesson with minimal student involvement. While students can function in English, their perception of it as an academic pursuit seems obvious. Those not currently employed by businesses requiring language skills probably do not practice their English outside of the classroom. This has been identified by many instructors. While it is important that students receive accurate feedback regarding their pronunciation (practice is essential), the Audio-Lingual Method does not produce independent student speech. Students are not asked questions often enough about themselves aside from the text in question. We have seen that the "interview" segment of Department of Education tests which aim to determine speaking ability bring with them many limitations (time not being the least consideration) and cannot, by themselves, hope to effectively measure student ability. The creation of speaking clubs at some schools, where students meet to practice their English in a conversational setting, is a positive and healthy development among foreign language students in Ho Chi Minh City. Such speaking clubs must be promoted by institutions and individuals who are committed to improving language ability for their students.

In his excellent study, Getting To Know The Vietnamese And Their Culture, Vietnamese-American linguist Vuong G. Thuy, reflects on past problems on language training in his native land:

> [lack of communicative competency]. . .was partly due to lack of qualified teachers of foreign languages and native speakers of these languages whose assistance was much needed. Shortages of good textbooks and audio-visual aids worsened the problem. . .with a limited number of hours each week varying from three to six hours per language and having practically no opportunity to practice the languages learned in the classroom, the student could hardly use these languages functionally. . .most Vietnamese students could read and write the two foreign languages [English and French] better than they could understand or speak them.[1]

Dr. Thuy's comments capture the very essence of the challenges Vietnamese educators face today though such observations were recorded over twenty years ago. In the absence of native speakers, meaningful textbooks and a methodology which did not promote speaking ability, it seemed unlikely that significant progress could be made. And yet the shift away from traditional teaching methodologies such as the Grammar Translation Method toward somewhat more communicative approaches like the Audio-Lingual Method is cause for encouragement. As well, we have seen how different teachers at different language schools in Ho Chi Minh City have created their own teaching styles fusing a more communicative approach with a recognition of Vietnamese cultural values. Such innovation is quite remarkable in the context of an isolated, developing country.

It would seem that if we were to isolate the most significant stumbling block in current language training in Vietnam, we could quite correctly point to teacher training. Many instructors commented on the need for teacher self-development and sharing common problems with their colleagues. Almost all spoke of the need to interact more with native speakers and have such professionals help them with their teaching challenges. All agree there are many textbooks available yet few felt confident regarding the present situation. It will not be enough to simply raise teachers' salaries in Vietnam (though surely this would attract more qualified instructors). An attempt must be made to create meaningful relationships between teacher training programs in Vietnam and abroad. The University of Education of Ho Chi Minh City recognizes the need for such interaction and has made steps toward that end. It should be remembered that the community is not the political capital of the country and that Hanoi as well receives educational assistance. Recent trends in global development have shifted the emphasis away from foreigners teaching native students to foreigners working with local staff and upgrading their skills. This is precisely what is needed in Ho Chi Minh City. Never before have local residents had the opportunity to interact with foreigners in casual social settings but this does not make up for a clear deficiency of native English-speakers working with local educators on the current challenges of language training in Ho Chi Minh City. An infusion of qualified language professionals, capable of creating new curriculum, independent to a certain degree of the text being used, is crucial.

The Issue of Communicative Competency

The issue of communicative competency is one that has been raised throughout this discussion. While all instructors desire their students to be able to speak freely and unhindered, Vietnam does however, bring with it certain historic traditions which are inextricably linked to its colonial past and cultural influences.

One hundred years of French colonial occupation and China's unshakable hold on the Vietnamese cultural psyche, have impacted, to a significant degree, the way the Vietnamese perceive education and the role of the teacher. For centuries, Vietnamese wrote the Chinese-oriented Mandarinate examinations (which were only discontinued in 1919) whose goal was not only to determine an understanding of Confucian knowledge but also elevated successful students to a higher social status in their community. The image of the teacher as a type of omniscient authority figure was secure. Vietnamese students were forever conditioned to perceive their teachers as holders of all knowledge whose judgement was always held in high esteem.

In a similar way, the French colonial occupation also contributed to how the Vietnamese perceive authority figures around them. While much has been written about The French Colonial Period (1859-1954), it seems safe to suggest that an alien culture (the French) that perceives a native culture (the Vietnamese) as "uncivilized" will invariably do what it can to "educate" the masses in their image. The generations of Vietnamese that endured the French presence were, again, conditioned to perceive their European conquisitors as total authority figures. The French impact on Vietnamese education was significant. In addition to attempting total cultural immersion, the French also attempted to impose a French linguistic model on the Vietnamese language. Even though Vietnamese sentence structure lacks the same Subject-Verb-Object formality as European languages, the French attempted to mold Vietnamese into a French-oriented writing style: dictating a prose structure alien to that of Vietnamese writing.

The French frequently referred to their presence in Indochina as their "Mission Civilisatrise"-their mission to civilize the region. Certainly the violent conflict France and Vietnam found themselves in the early 1950's was almost a logical conclusion to a century of occupation. In addition to the political mandate the French imposed on the region, they also imposed a model of cultural inferiority on their occupants which in turn becomes part of the historic tradition of occupation that the Chinese engaged in for over a thousand years in a previous epoch.

Does the issue of communicative competency relate to such national experiences? Clearly, communicative competency requires the nurturing of the individual and the belief in self. It requires the creation of an equal playing field in the classroom where the instructor and the student communicate on their own terms in their own way. It would seem that Vietnamese cultural norms, the almost deification of the teacher, in conjunction with the country's historic traditions of colonial occupation from both Europe and Asia, have contributed to an environment which may hinder the development of communicative competency of the individual. This should not be thought of as a publicly understood phenomenon but more a reality in the national subconscious. Foreign instructors working in Vietnam will clearly be challenging such conceptions.

Determining Structure and Content

This discussion began with a fundamental question: "What determines the structure and content of instruction at foreign language centres in Ho Chi Minh City?" While nearly all schools observed identified the use of language books in addition to the Streamline series, not one of the classes observed used any other text but the Streamline series. The availability of texts, perhaps more than any other factor, is the prime influence in determining the structure of classes at these centres. The continuing use of one primary text which outlines what will be learned, and in what duration, has clearly been shown to have the greatest affect on the overall learning strategy of language schools in Ho Chi Minh City. Whether or not instructors approach the text in a different manner does not change the fact that nearly every single centre in the community is using the exact same text. The Streamline series has become, in itself, the indisputable building block of language schools. We have seen how the Department of Education and Training uses this text to model its own examinations. In addition, evening centres that do not prepare students for such tests and use their own are still using the Streamline series as a framework for their in-school examinations.

How do we reconcile the endless variety of English language textbooks in Ho Chi Minh City and the seeming inability of foreign language schools to exploit such resources? Clearly, institutions of higher education which are in the practice of training teachers and contributing to the country's intercultural knowledge draw their learning strategies from different sources. But it would also appear that in the world of Continuing Adult Education in Vietnam a certain kind of educational atrophy is being experienced. While students themselves have access to a variety of texts within the bookshops of their schools, classes themselves are still clinging to one central source, which as we have seen, portrays one narrowly defined English-speaking society.

Not one of the classes observed in this study recorded any instructor incorporating his/her own materials into the classroom. The absence of original materials underlines how the content of the Streamline series is the content of the classes. It would appear that students seeking education which draws from a Vietnamese cultural context while at the same time looking for the linguistic building blocks of the Streamline series, must rely on the individual instructor found at any given institution to possess the necessary skills and insight to elevate students to that level of learning.

The structure and content of instruction at foreign language schools in Ho Chi Minh City is drawn not necessarily from the availability of text, but primarily from the decision to cling to one text, Streamline English. Whether through discouragement, lack of resources, personal choice or cultural expectation, instructors do not create original materials for the classroom and because they are required to complete sections of the Streamline series as part of the curriculum of their schools, the continued use and emphasis of this key text will not change. Because the Department of Education and Training draws from this text as opposed to working with foreign educational services to create meaningful and diverse language examinations, English language students in Ho Chi Minh City will continue to draw their perceptions about English and English language societies from the Streamline series. Interviews conducted with students confirm such attitudes and indeed are shared by many instructors.

Recommendations and Expectations

In summarizing what we have learned regarding English language training in Ho Chi Minh City, we can identify what needs to be done to address current imbalances in the present situation. Such initiatives cannot be the sole responsibility of Vietnamese educators and must be shared by all those committed to expanding the role of education in the developing world.

A) *Infusion of foreign teaching professionals*

Native English-speaking teacher trainers represent one of the greatest current needs. Assistance in creating materials reflecting both an internationalist approach to the English speaking world and a sensitivity to education within a Vietnamese cultural context is essential.

More foreign teachers will obviously improve the pronunciation and inter-cultural understanding of the Vietnamese but in addition, such an initiative will create an environment where English language study will not be perceived as an academic pursuit or the domain of the economic elite but rather as an accessible and attainable source for personal development manifested through native speakers bringing their own experiences to the classroom. The creation of a more humanistic environment of language study in Vietnam will be achieved.

B) *A greater emphasis on communicative competency in classrooms and examinations*

Less emphasis on the Audio-Lingual Method and more on individual speaking is the best strategy to challenge current teaching methodologies whose effectiveness in communicative competency is doubtful.

Individual, comprehensible speaking is the desired result in any kind of language study. If we can start focusing specifically on communicative competency as a desired result in Vietnamese language classrooms, a higher level of speaking and linguistic confidence will be achieved, thereby empowering students with the knowledge that they can speak the language correctly and accurately. A general elevation of the language skills of the Vietnamese will be achieved.

C) *More educational research*

Recent United Nations Educational Service Reports published in 1991 did not focus specifically on Continuing Adult Education vis-a-vis language training in conjunction with current government economic policy. A general survey such as this cannot hope to scientifically examine the dynamics of teacher training in conjunction with the demographic complexities of Ho Chi Minh City. Future educational research in the context of Vietnamese urban studies is greatly needed.

No changes in Vietnamese education can take place until we acquire a firmer understanding not only of how the educational system operates in Vietnam, but how the dynamicsof the society work.

Scientific studies are important contributors to this concern. Such new knowledge will help us understand where our best resources should be placed in terms of instructors or textbooks and what we can expect from such measures.

As Vietnam continues its economic development, it is clear that the role of language training will grow even more than it is now. If the Vietnamese educational system is going to grow with the country's rapid development, ongoing evaluations such as this will be needed in the future. Vietnam's remarkable re-entry onto the world's stage in the 1990's sends a hopeful and promising message to other developing countries and western professionals committed to that development. Without effective language training, such growth will remain doubtful. Vietnam's renaissance is a new status for language training in development, a resource that will continue to upgrade and improve the economic viability of the developing nation.

APPENDIX A:

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING "LEVEL B" EXAMINATION

The following language test was prepared and administered by officials of the Department of Education of Ho Chi Minh City at Minh Duc High School in District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City on July 24, 1994 with several hundred intermediate level students writing the exam. All were attempting to secure their "B Level" standing which also required an oral exam which took place that day.

As noted earlier, these language tests are administered every two months in Ho Chi Minh City and should not be confused with tests created by institutions of higher learning in the community. I am indebted to Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Quynh of the Department of Education and Training of Ho Chi Minh City for making available this examination for reproduction.

LEVEL-B EXAMINATION

Duration: 120 minutes

Part A: GRAMMAR & STRUCTURE

Choose the best answer to fill in the blank.

1. They live.......the other side of the street.
   A. in B. for C. on D. by

2. I should have asked her for a plan of the house. If I.......
   I would have found everything.
   A. did B. have C. would D. had

3. When my wife........back tomorrow, she will find everything in order
   A. will come B. comes c. shall come D. come

4. After........information without success, we bought a book on the subject.
   A. asking B. to ask for C. to ask D. asking for

5. He's.........his sister.
   A. much more tall that B. much taller than
   C. much more tall than D. much taller that

6. She had three sons, all..........became doctors.
   A. of whom B. which C. who D. of which

7. He made me...........
   A. That I got angry B. to be angry C. be angry D. angry

8. We usually have fine weather......... summer.
   A. in B. at C. while D. on

9. ....of them understood him.
   A. Anyone B. No one C. someone D. None

10. That's the firm.........
    A. We've been dealing with B. What we've been dealing with
    C. What we've been treating with D. We've been treating with

11. He isn't.......... to reach the ceiling
    A. enough tall C. tall enough
    B. so tall D. as tall

12. He'd done that before........?
    A. hadn't he C. didn't he
    B. shouldn't he D. Wouldn't he

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13. She let the children......... to play.
A. go out C. to go out
B. that they went out D. going out

14. I'm going to spend a few days with some........ of mine, who live in the north of Scotland.
A. companies B. familiars C. neighbors D. relatives

15. I didn't write it. That isn't my..........on the cheque.
A. signature B. firm C. letter D. mark

16. We arrived.........England a week ago.
A. to B. on C. in D. at

17. He paid.........in five-pound notes
A. how much the car C. the car for
B. for the car D. the car

18. The office is only..........from here.
A. at 100 yards away C. at 100 yards far
B. about 100 yards far D. about 100 yards away

19. ....problem for foreigners remembering to drive on the left
A. It's so much C. That's so much
B. That's such a D. It's such a

20. We'll have to drive carefully.............home.
A. on the way to C. in the way
B. on the way D. in the way to

21. I told them how to get there but perhaps I......them a map
A. should have given C. ought give
B. had to give D. must have given

22. What a nuisance ! I.........to all this trouble if I'd known they weren't coming.
A. mustn't have gone C. needn't have gone
B. didn't need to go D. hadn't to go

23. He won the first ....in the competition.
A. reward B. prize C. premium D. price

24. Sixty percent of television viewers chose him as their ....actor.
A. favorite B. popular C. preferred D. favored

25. They're staying with......... the time being until they find a place of their own.
A. in B. for C. since D. during

26. Our school...........some 50 years ago.
A. was building C. was being built
B. was built D. is building

27. He telephone........because she didn't pay the bill.
A. is cut off C. is cutting off
B. was cut off D. cuts off

28. Do you know when that window................?
A. was breaking B. was broken C. breaks D. broken

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29. ....I like fish. I can't stand trout.
A. Although B.because C. So D. that's why

30. This is the best film that..........
A. I had seen C. I am going to see
B. I saw D. I have seen

31. Have got some liquid..........polishing furniture?
A. to B. so as to C. for D. I have seen

32. It is time for the children...............
A. go to bed C. going to bed
B. to go to bed D. to be gone to bed

33. That flood killed..........last year
A. hundred people C. hundreds peoples
B. two hundred people D. hundred of people

34. The doctor told her to take these pills...........
A. two hours each C.every two hours
B. two every hour D.. two-hour every

35. It's difficult to make a decision..............
A. without a fact C. without knowing all the facts
B. without to know facts D. all of these

36. You........more last week.
A. should study C. should be studying
B. should have studied D. did study

37. How long ago ....here?
A. did you move C. will you move
B. have you moved D. do you move

38. If I.......you, I would not buy that house.
A. am B. were C. was D . had been

39. It's........to go to bed early
A. a good thing C. a good idea
B. a good ideal D. well

40. I don't know............................at the party.
A. what to say C. where to say it
B. how to say D. All of these

Pick out the lettered part that should be coected according to standard written English

41. She is the nicest person that I had known since I came here
A B C D

42. John is more intelligent as most students in this class.
A B C D

43. It did not rain much this week. So, it is very warm.
A B D

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44. A school should not be in the center of city, there are
A B
much noises almost all day.
C D

45. The little children were let to go away without delay
A B C D

Re-write the following sentences as instructed

46. John is very intelligent. He can pass the examination
Use ENOUGH to combine these 2 sentences into one.

47. The coffee is very hot. I cannot drink it.
Use TOO and make these two sentences one.

48. I have never seen such a big plane.
Begin : Never...

49. I am very happy to see you at the party today.
Begin : When

50. To speak English fluently is not easy.
Begin : It is....

Part B: READING COMPREHENSION

Directions : ***Read the following passage carefully and answer the questionsbelow it***

Every four years people all over the world watch the Olympic Games. It is a time for all kinds of people to unite in peace. Some of them join together to compete for gold medals. Millions of other people watch them on television.

The first Olympic Games were in Greece in 776 B.C. There was only one event. People ran a race the length of the statidum. The Games lasted one day. Slowly more events were added. They were only for men, and women could not even watch them. Only Greeks competed. It was a time of peace, and the government let everyone travel safely. Kings competed against common people. The winners became national heroes.

The Greeks built a new stadium for the modern competition in Athens in 1896 for athletes from several countries. Then there were Olympics every four years in different cities in Europe and the United States until 1952, and in Melbourne, Tokyo, Mexico City, and Montreal after that. Today there must be Olympic Games every 4 year. The Games must have at least fifteen events, and they cannot last more than sixteen days There is no age limit. The competitors must not be professionals, but amateurs.

In 1956, Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon boycotted the games. They did not compete in the Games because several countries took the Suez Canal from Egypt that year. Other countries boycotted the Games in 1964 and 1976. In 1980 the U.S and other countries boycotted the Games Moscow. In 1984 the Soviet Union and other countries boycotted the Games in Los Angeles. How can the Nation of the world solve this problem ? Maybe the Games should be in Greece every year, where they began. Then athletes from all over the world could compete without any boycotts.

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A. VOCABULARY. *Choose the best answer*

51. People who work hard seldom ______.
A. relax B. stop C. play D. go out for the day

52. Major means ______________.
A. very important C. very different
B. not very important D. none of these

53. The opposite of melt may be ________.
A. become a liquid C. break into pieces
B. change to ice D. All of these

54. The opposite of modern may be ....
A. huge B. important C. traditional D. updated

55. Toyota and Honda are........... They both make cars.
A. competes B. enemies C. opponents D. competitors

56. Both men and women compete in automobile.........
A. competitors B. races C. professionals D. athletes

57. The speed...... on my street is 60 KPH.
A. limitation B. limit C. off limits D. maximum

58 A fire fighter saved a family from burning to death. He received a ....from the city government
A. reward B.prize C. badge D. medal

59. Bod is an.......tennis player. He plays for fun.
A. professional B. competitive C. amateur D. pleasure

60. Everyone needs ....$30 a week for food.
A. least B. the least C. at least D. less

61. Engineers, doctors, and lawyers are........
A.amateurs B.non-professional C.careers D. professional

62. David's baby sister fell into the swimming pool, but he saved her. Now he is a ....in his family
A. Wonder B. hero C. athlete D. medal winner

63. In old times, kings competed against.........
A .common B. commoners C. common people D. B&C are correct

64. At times, a country or some countries.... the Games.
A. like B. hate C. love taking part in D. boycott

65. How can the nations of the world........this problem?
A. boycott B. argue C. solve D. explain

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B. COMPREHENSION. *Fill in the blanks*

66. What event did the first competitors take part in?........
A. The length of the stadium G. Many games
B. A race D. None of these

67. How were women treated in those days in Greece? They......
A. could watch the games C. could not even see the Games
B. could join in the Games D. could support the athletes

68. How many event are in the Games?.............
A. Only one C. More than ten
B. Just two or there D. At least fifteen

69. What are qualifications for competitors?..............
A. Under 30 years of age C. non-professionals
B. Greek nationality D. Speed limit.

70 . ...usually win the most medals in the Olympics.
A. Professional athletes C. Competitors
B. Amateurs D. Athletes

71. Many countries have boycotted the Games for...........
A. economic reasons C. better competition
B. political reasons D. winning more medal later

72. There are rules for ....
A. The Games & the competitors C.The spectators & judges
B. The competitors & spectators D. The audience

73. Today..........compete in the Games.
A. only men C. both men and women
B. only women D. None of them

74. Which might be the suitable title for the passage?........
A. Games in Greece C. The Olympic Games
B. The first games D. Games played by athletes

75. The main idea in the last paragraph is...........
A. That many countries have boycotted the olympics.
B. The Olympics should not be boycotted.
C. The Olympics should always be welcome.
D. None of these.

C. PREPOSITIONS & FREQUENCY ADVERBS

A. to B. in C. at D. of

76. The storm is moving from east.......... west.
77. The manager .... the team is very busy.
78. Did you read the list........competitors?
79. The major event is ....the afternoon .
80. Imagine that you are.........the Olympics.
81. The first race is ....10.00 P.M

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82. I t's not easy to find an answer....... that problem.

Put these adverbs in their right places: ,A,B,C or D

83. Usually (A) What time (B) do you (C) get up in the morning ?
84. Never (A) Will I (B) go (C) there again ?
85. Ever (A) Have (B) you (C) seen a flying saucer ?
86. Still (A) he (B) can't know how (C) to behave .
87. Always (A) He's (B) asking (C) me questions .
88. Seldom (A) do (B) they go out (C) for the evening .
89. Already (A) She (B) has (C) had (D) breakfast .
90. Sometimes (A) Everybody (B) gets (C) angry (D) .

Part C: *CLOSE TEST*

WRITE THE MISSING WORDS ON THE BACK OF ANSWER SHEET.

We now have the information and ....(1) ability to...........(2) huge problems. However, This is not .... (3) problem for country or.......(4) area of ....(5) word. It is a ....(6) all humans. The people and the nations of the world must work.........to conserve the ....(8) resources. ....(9) one controls future, but we........(10) help make it.

THE END

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APPENDIX B:

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF APPLICATION FORM TO OPEN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE NIGHT CENTRE IN HO CHI MINH CITY

The following document is required to be completed by all prospective foreign language night centre directors who wish to operate such an institution in Ho Chi Minh City. Completed forms are to be returned to the Foreign Languages Department within the Department of Continuing Education of Ho Chi Minh City. An additional fee is required. The decision to grant licenses is then left to officials of the department.

In its original form, this document is written in Vietnamese and makes no attempt to ascertain English linguistic ability of prospective night school administrators. I would like to thank Mr. On of the Saigon Foreign Language School for making this document available to me. I am particularly thankful to Mr. Khanh Hoang Do of TranSaigon Inc. of Toronto for realizing a most complicated translation.

DOSSIER

SCHOOL FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGES: . . . . . .
(Please print) . . . .

Address: . . . .

Telephone: . . . .

199....

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM
Independence - Freedom - Happiness
-:-:-

Application form for school opening

Dear Sir / Madam:

After studying the bulletin #15/DTTC dated July 2, 1990, the notice #3367/TC - BT of the Ministry of Education and Training regarding regulations for organizing and operating a foreign languages centre, and having filed a complete application in accordance with the notice #624/GDBT dated July 8, 1992 of the city school board regarding guides to the organisation and operation of a foreign languages centre,

I (name of person/company):..............................

located at (residence/company address):.................

....

would like to apply for opening a (foreign languages) school, which

name is:...

to teach foreign languages. Name of language:..................

Duration of courses:..............................

I know I am responsible of all school activities and abide to all laws, regulations, rules and decisions of the Education and Training Department.

Dated at Ho Chi Minh City on the ...th day
of the ......(month) in the 19... (year)

Applicant's signature
and seal (if applicable)

BOROUGH/ZONE COUNCIL'S REMARKS:
(If under the management of the Education & Training Department)

Notes: This form can be used for opening more branches (other than the main branch). Other branches must have a Licence.

LIST OF STAFF & TEACHERS

Full name	Date of Birth	Level		Duties	Notes
		Cultural background	Technical training		
	- A. MANAGEMENT				
	- B. TEACHERS(photocopy of degree/diploma included)				
	- C. STAFF				

TEACHING PLAN

Course: . . . .
Length of Course: . . . .
Education level when applying: . . . .
Training level (if applicable): . . . .

A. PLAN OF TRAINING:

I Objectives:

1) - Descriptions:

a - Theory . . . .
. . . .
. . . .
. . . .

b - Practical study . . . .
. . . .
. . . .
. . . .

c - Teaching materials . . . .
. . . .

2) - Student's performance upon completion of each level: .
. . . .
. . . .

II Schedule of training:

No.	Activities	Duration (weeks)	Percentage of full load (%)	Notes
1	General activities: (orientation, closing, review...)			
2	Study Plan:			
	Lectures:			
	tests, exams:			
	Total:			

I. TEACHING MATERIALS & EQUIPMENTS

Item description	Quantity	Quality (%) Area (m^2)	Label, source (school, student or rental property)	Notes
		- A. CLASSROOM		
1. Lecture				
2. Practice (audio)				
		- B. CLASSROOM FURNISHINGS		
1. Tables				
2. Chairs				
3. Blackboards				
4. Lights, fans				
5. Equipments, models for teaching				
		- C. FIRE PREVENTION SAFETY		

II. COURSE OUTLINE TIMETABLE

No.	courses	Duration (periods)	Percentage of course load (5)	Notes

No.	CHAPTER (title)	Duration	Notes

School Name: . . . .

Address: . . . .

No.	Term or Courses	Total Income		Total Expenses							Balance	Notes
		Monthly Fee	Term Fee	Equipment	Rent, Hydro, Water	Salaries for Teachers, Staff	Administration	Materials	Advertising	Program Fee		

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APPENDIX C:

SAMPLE UNIT OF STREAMLINE ENGLISH*

As noted throughout this study, Streamline English is a language-learning textbook which is used extensively at many, if not all English language night centres in Ho Chi Minh City. For those not familiar with the series, the following is a typical-type passage from these books.

---

*Reprinted with kind permission by OxfordUniversity Press.

SEEING THE DOCTOR

Exercise 1
List as many words as you can about:
a. illness
b. medical treatment
c. parts of the body.

Listen to the conversation and check any words in your list that are used in the conversation.

Craig Williams has gone to see Dr. Casey. He's in her office now.

Mary Healy fell off her bicycle. She's in the emergency room at the local hospital. Dr. Singh is examining her.

Doctor: Well, hello, young lady. It looks like you've had quite a fall. What were you doing? Going too fast?

Mary: Yes, doctor. I fell off going around a corner.

Doctor: I see. Well, let me take a look at you. Hmm. That's a bad cut. I'll have to put a couple of stitches in that.

Mary: I have a cut here too, doctor.

Doctor: It looks worse than it is. Only the skin is broken. The nurse will clean it up for you. It'll sting, but that's all. Now, does it hurt anywhere else?

Mary: I have a pain in my arm. It's very sore, and it feels stiff.

Doctor: Well, there's nothing broken, but you've bruised your shoulder. It'll be sore for a few days. Did you bump your head?

Mary: Yes, I did. I fell on the bike. But it doesn't hurt now.

Doctor: Did you feel dizzy?

Mary: No, not at all.

Doctor: Look up there. I'm going to shine this light in your eye. Uh huh. All right. That's fine. I'll sew this cut up, and the nurse will put a bandage on it. Then you can go home.

Jean Weiner has gone to see Dr. Carlos Valencia, her family doctor.

Jean: Good morning, doctor.

Doctor: Oh, good morning, Mrs. Weiner. What seems to be the problem today?

Jean: It's those pills, doctor. They don't seem to be doing me any good.

Doctor: Really? What's wrong?

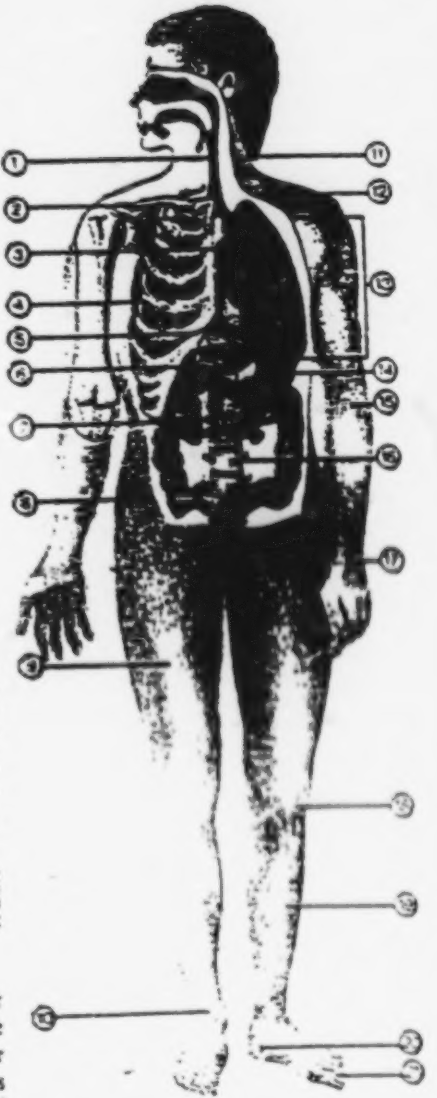
Jean: What isn't wrong with me, doc-

Doctor: You're doing very well, Mrs. Weiner! You'll live to be a hundred!

Jean: I have this terrible cough, doctor, and I still have that rash on my hands. And the backache! I can hardly walk sometimes. You don't think it's cancer, do you? I've been reading so much about it in the paper.

Doctor: No, no. No chance of that. You're in good shape for your age.

Jean: You can't be serious. Anyway, I'm almost finished with the old pills, doctor. Can you give me a different color next time?



①	throat	⑧	hip	⑮	elbow
②	collar bone	⑨	thigh	⑯	spine
③	lung	⑩	ankle	⑰	wrist
④	rib	⑪	neck	⑱	knee
⑤	heart	⑫	shoulder	⑲	shin
⑥	liver	⑬	chest	⑳	heel
⑦	kidney	⑭	stomach	㉑	toe

Exercise 2
Rosemary Trabulsi wants to take out a life insurance policy. The insurance company has sent her to see a doctor for a physical examination. This is part of the form that has to be filled out.

Practice their conversation. (*Let me take/measure your.... /Have you ever had ...?/Have you been vaccinated against ...?* etc.)

CONTINENTAL MUTUAL
BENEFICIAL INSURANCE CO. Boston

Physical Form 4F84

Name ....
Marital status ....
Date of birth ....

Children ....
Occupation ....
....

Address ....
....
....

Measurements

Height ....
Weight ....
Blood pressure ....

Pulse rate ....
Chest (a) normal ....
(b) expanded ....

Waist ....
Hips ....
Eyesight ....

Medical history (please give approximate dates where possible)

Measles ....
Mumps ....
Rubella (German measles) ....
Chicken pox ....
Whooping cough ....
Other serious illnesses (give details below) ....
....

Vaccinations and inoculations
Polio ....
Small pox ....
Others ....
Injuries or problems
Arms, hands ....
Back ....
Legs, knees ..

Please give details of any hospital treatment or operations (not including normal pregnancy)
....
....
....
....
....

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ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1. "Investment Structure and Foreign Partners", The Saigon Times, June 16-22 1994, 12.

CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF HO CHI MINH CITY

1. All statistics regarding different aspects of Ho Chi Minh City are taken from Ho Chi Minh City: Today and Tomorrow Promotional investment packet published by The People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, 1994
2. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Quynh, Chief of Continuing Education Department, Vice Director of Foreign Language Center, Ho Chi Minh City, interview by author, tape recording, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, September 15, 1994. All information attributed to the Department of Education of Ho Chi Minh City is from this source.
3. The exact student population of foreign language schools in Ho Chi Minh City is unknown. This estimate was offered Mr. Phan Van Luong, Director of the Dong Khoi English Language Center, interviewed by the author, tape recording, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July 23, 1994.
4. While no statistics are readily available regarding the disparity in student enrollment of these different tests, this estimate was offered by Phan Hoang Quy, Vice Director of the English Department of the University of Ho Chi Minh City, interviewed by the author, Ho Chi Minh City, September 15, 1994.
5. Extracts of interview segment of certificate exams observed by author, video tape recording, Minh Duc Highschool, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, September 25, 1994.

CHAPTER 3: DONG KHOI ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTER

1. Thuy G. Vuong Getting to Know the Vietnamese and Their Culture (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1975) pg. 73
2. Nguyen Van Hiep, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
3. Vu Van Dong, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
4. Ly Minh, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.

5. Pham thi Thanh Ha, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
6. Luong Thi Huy Hoang, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam, July, 1994.
7. Nguyen Van Hiep, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam, July, 1994.

CHAPTER 4: SAIGON FOREIGN LANGUAGE SCHOOL

1. Tran Dinh Nguyen, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
2. Le Quoc Nam, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
3. Solly Aquino, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
4. Nguyen Van Loc, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.

CHAPTER 5: UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION FOREIGN LANGUAGE CENTER NUMBER 8

1. Le Thi Anh Nguyen, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
2. Same as above.
3. Nguyen Toan Thang, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
4. Tran Thi Bich Phuong, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
5. Same as above.
6. Nguyen Thi Phuong Tha, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.

CHAPTER 6: UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION FOREIGN LANGUAGE NIGHT CENTER NO. 11

1. Nguyen Hun Quy, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.
2. Nguyen Van Phuong, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.

3. Le Thi Kim Loan, responding to written questionnaire, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, July, 1994.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

1. Thuy G. Voung, Getting to Know The Vietnamese And their Culture (New York: Fredercik Ungar, 1975) pg. 73-74.

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